

Insight into Meditation and Yoga

Yogi Surajnath

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*baisanta pūrā ramanti sūrā, eka rasi rākhanti kāyā,
antari eka rasi dekhibā. bicaranti gorakharāyā.*

The adept sitting, the hero roaming,
intently focused on the body,
gazing inward,
Gorakh Ray roams.

— Gorakh, Sabadi 183.

*

*Vedanānam samudayam ca athangamam ca assādam ca
ādīnavam ca nissaranam ca
yathābhūtam viditvā anupādāvimutto, bhikkhave, tathāgato*

Having experienced sensations as they really are, their arising, their passing away, the relishing of them, the danger in them and release from them, the Enlightened One, monks, is fully liberated, being free from all attachment.

— Dīgha-nikāya I.36, Brahmajāla Sutta.

*

In the space which thought creates around itself there is no love. This space divides man from man, and in it is all the becoming, the battle of life, the agony and fear. Meditation is the ending of this space, the ending of the “me”.

— J. Krishnamurti.

*

The klesha, the passion or negative emotion, is just a thought and the antidote to it [in certain schools] is just another thought. This is like trying to wash away the blood on our

hands with more blood. Thoughts will not eradicate thoughts. There is no end to thoughts. Thoughts have no limits; we can follow thoughts and we will never find the end to them. When we search for reality with thoughts, we will never find a final or ultimate truth, because thoughts inevitably lead to more thoughts.

— Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

*

Meditation according to a system is the avoidance of the fact of what you are; it is far more important to understand yourself, the constant changing of the facts about yourself, than to meditate in order to find god or have visions, sensations and other forms of entertainment.

— J. Krishnamurti.

*

Remember, we don't meditate to "get" things but to get "rid" of things. We do it, not with desire but with letting go. If you "want" anything you won't find it.

— Ajahn Chah.

*

Every system, method, binds thought to time, but choiceless awareness of every thought and feeling, understanding of their motives, their mechanism, allowing them to blossom, is the beginning of meditation. When thought and feeling flourish and die, meditation is the movement beyond time.

— J. Krishnamurti.

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I – CONSCIOUSNESS (KUNDALINI)

A healthy body, sharp sensitivity, and steady, alert awareness are basic needs both for our daily life and for spiritual work — the work of meditation. The mind must be energetic: everything is energy, passion is energy. We may distinguish between right passion — for our daily needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education, work or health — and silent passion, which is passion for supreme intelligence. Insofar as we do not yet know what supreme intelligence is, passion for that is silent passion.

Meditation implies righteousness and silent passion for God, that is, silent passion for supreme intelligence. Or let us say that meditation needs the foundation of righteousness and silent passion. We must be sincere and very serious for a flight into spiritual life. Seriousness, silent passion, attention, meditation are all one movement.

This work is divided into two main parts. The first, Chapters I-XIV, deals specifically with the theory and practice of meditation, while the second, Chapters XV-XX, covers various aspects of yoga and physical exercise. Chapter XXI gives a brief biography of Surajnath. The contents of the first part are all interrelated, and therefore the reader is advised to read these chapters, not in the conventional linear way, from start to finish, but *meditatively*, dipping here, pausing there, going back to re-read and so on, so as to absorb steadily all that is being revealed. One chapter may speak more directly to one particular reader, another chapter will make more sense to another reader, and so on. Discursive thought, which

corresponds to linear progression, can indeed gain some understanding and synthesize the material, sometimes correctly, and sometimes wrongly, but *what is of real worth is the understanding that comes from meditation*. This first chapter is, then, a kind of introduction, and the principles of theory and practice are further developed in the following chapters.

In English dictionaries “meditation” is frequently defined as an activity of the intellect, reason, discursive thought, the act of concentration on some word, idea or image as a religious activity. And “contemplation” is defined as something deeper than the intellect, reason, the activity of concentration, or discursive thought. However, we are using the word contemplation in the sense of intellect, reason, concentration, and meditation in the sense of steady awareness, choiceless awareness, observation, attention.

Thought and desire (whether positive or negative — attachment or revulsion) go together: we know of movements in the mind of calculating, discriminating, analysing, concentrating, contemplating, weighing, judging, suppressing, avoiding etc., accompanied by anger, fear, hatred, greed, envy, sympathy, desire, affection, compassion etc., and by words and images, which can be related to the past or the future. While thought is necessary in pursuing the various activities of life, such as food, shelter, scientific knowledge, practical and artistic skills, political activity and so on, it also claims to be capable of knowing everything, and this it cannot do. Thought is observer and observed, me and not-me, it can gather untold information and knowledge,

but it is always limited. It is measure, it is division, it is not wholeness. Thought is the product of the past, it is a self-enclosing, multiplying chain of experience, knowledge, memory, thought and action. From action comes experience; as thought is of the past and being a material, mechanical process, it is a broken movement, it is vibrations. *Thought, the past, projects itself into the future through the present.* Thought is the momentum between past and future through the present. Thought meets the present, the ever now, but does not stop there; it uses the present as a podium, modifies itself and projects itself into future. And from this we have “should be” or “should not be”. Thus we may say that thought is subjective time and subjective direction, which go together, they are one and the same movement: and time is transitory. However, thought cannot transform itself — thought is always in response to the past, and therefore it is incapable of transforming the “what is”, the present, whether it be greed, fear, anger, conflict, crisis or whatever. It can only modify, change, suppress, escape, avoid. Being time, momentum, thought cannot observe “what is”, it cannot be a still, steady observer. Thus, there is no observation when awareness is entangled with thought, or, rather, when thought responds or reacts there is no observation. Thought is me, I, ego; it is divided and fragmented. Awareness becomes divided and dissipated when it is entangled with thought, so that while there may be some awareness of what is happening — sounds, sensations etc. — this is incomplete awareness.

Thought is intellect. Thought can judge, analyse, project, measure, and get it right or wrong. Attention, however, is a

totally different dimension. It is simply attending to “what is”. In attention there is no speculation, projection, hypothesis, judgment, discrimination and so on — attention is free from all this. Attention is just being, it is totally other than subjective time. And since it is not time, not measurement, direction or fragmentation, it is wholeness of mind, wholeness of awareness. We find wholeness of energy in attention, in steady awareness; *it is this undivided awareness in meditation that is capable of transforming the impressions recorded in the mind.* Meditation, thus, is steady awareness of feelings. There is a fundamental difference between a mind that is dominated by thought and desire, and the steady awareness of meditation, even when thoughts are coming and going in the mind. Thought, which is intellect, is transitory, whereas in steady awareness, which is intelligence, there is transformation, that is, the transformation of desire, anger, fear, pride, envy, attachment, greed and so on. Be open towards the sensations, feelings and thoughts that arise in the mind and steadily observe them: observation of thoughts actually means observation of the underlying feelings.

Thoughts, feelings or emotions and sensations are related — basically they are all sensations, even though they seem to be separate. Feelings are the summation of sensations: sensations result in feelings. Thought is deposited, stored memory in a part of the brain. Without sensations there is no life. But when these are recorded in the body-mind complex, then that record becomes the burden of mental impressions (*samskāras*), we have acquired from the past. If we try to attend to thoughts in meditation, we become entangled with

them, and the meditation remains very shallow. Therefore, in meditation we should give no importance to the murmuring of our thoughts — rather we should give greatest importance to feelings. This is easy for any human being to do, even if thoughts keep on murmuring in the mind. This murmuring is like ripples or waves on the surface, and we can dive below them, into the depths of the mind, into feelings and sensations, and thus there is no entanglement with thoughts. This does not mean that there is no “me” sense when we are attentive to feelings and sensations. The “me” sense can be present, but we see that that “me” is being transformed. We shall see a basic change in “me”, in ourselves, with the withering, dissolving and transforming of the burden of mental impressions. These mental impressions, which are the contents of the mind, that is consciousness, are consciousness, and transformation of the mental impressions is the emptying of consciousness.

What is the body-and-mind phenomenon? It is composed of physical matter — skin, muscles, bones, heart, brain, nerves, blood and so on — and mind, which comprises thoughts, memory, feelings, sensations, awareness. Awareness, energy, intelligence are one and the same, they are all intelligence. However, we may distinguish between grades or levels of intelligence, such as matter intelligence, thought intelligence, attention intelligence and supreme intelligence — the first two grades belong to the field of intellect, the third is meditation and the fourth is the ultimate truth.

Basically everything is energy, that is, intelligence. Energy manifests as matter and mind, as various material things and

various beings. But this is not the limit of energy. There is a still higher energy that is space, silence or silent movement, nothingness. Space, silent movement, nothingness, emptiness mean the same. This energy is beyond any kind of time. Thought cannot touch or know this energy. It is wholeness of energy, it is cosmic: cosmic energy. It is not divided, not limited, not measurable, and it works on its own; thought cannot speculate about it, nor plan its operation. The silent movement of cosmic energy works on its own. We might think that silence and silent movement are paradoxical, but at this stage, language, words, even when quite rational and logical, are not adequate to describe it. Sometimes the word “intelligence” is used in a general sense, such as everything is intelligence; and sometimes it is used with the specific meaning of space, emptiness, silent movement, cosmic energy, attention, meditation and so on.

Attention is harmony, it is undivided, it is intelligence, or we can say that cosmic energy becomes focused in attention. This does not mean that attention is always continuous. The practice is very arduous. The mind will wander, but *the very awareness of this non-attention is itself attention*. As we practise, as we repeatedly return to attention, we come to realise that when there is attention there is no recording; and not only this: attention wipes out what has been recorded. Initially, the work of meditation is very arduous because of the mind’s habit of wandering, but with serious and sustained work there comes a change, in fact change is bound to occur. In meditation we shall see that the arising of feelings and sensations, the steady awareness of feelings and sensations and the withering or breaking down of feelings

and sensations, are all one movement. Actually in meditation consciousness is aware of its own movement, consciousness empties itself, because in meditation there is freedom from me, that is, consciousness is free of the “me” observer and that which is observed, and what continues to work there is intelligence. Meditation is free of subjective time and direction, and the awareness of the passing of time is suspended. This is not to deny the relevance of ordinary time in our daily lives, and the meditating mind will always remind us of our obligations. We can make mistakes, but the very understanding of a mistake is wisdom, intelligence; and a meditating mind is one that is free and open to acknowledge a mistake. Although there is no subjective time and the sense of chronological time is suspended during meditation, we can nevertheless become aware of the gradual emptying of feelings and sensations. It may seem paradoxical to use the word “gradual”, but the process is in fact very simple. We perceive that layers of feelings and sensations rise up in our awareness, and wither and break one after another. This is emptying of the mind. The feelings and sensations that leave their impressions in the mind are what we are calling “mental impressions”. They are present in our minds and must be uprooted.

We all experience chronological time as yesterday, today, tomorrow, morning, evening, childhood, youth, clock time and so on. But there is no subjective time apart from thought, thought is subjective time. Thought as technical knowledge, as memory, is a normal part of our lives, but when knowledge and memory become greed, envy, fear, anger, lust, pride, competition and so on we experience misery and

sorrow. Simply understanding this intellectually cannot wipe away the conditioning we have been exposed to. Thinking about attention is not attention. This is all so very simple — for we must be a light unto ourselves. Meditation is a light, a flame, in which there is emptying, breaking of conditioning and deepening of insight, unfolding of truth with flashes of perception. It is the awakening of intelligence.

Kundalinī or *kundalinī śakti* is a key yogic term. Literally *kundal* means coil and *śakti* means energy. *Kundalinī śakti* means coiled, conditioned energy. The description of *kundalinī śakti* as like a serpent or like fire is incorrect — this is simply a metaphor. *Kundalinī* means consciousness. Sleeping *kundalinī* means consciousness dominated by thought and desire, and awakened *kundalinī* means consciousness aware of its movement, consciousness aware of itself. Quite simply, non-attention is sleeping *kundalinī* and attention is awakened *kundalinī*. In other words, thought and desire oriented awareness is sleeping *kundalinī* and meditation oriented awareness is awakened *kundalinī*. Awareness, intelligence, consciousness, *kundalinī*, mind are synonymous.

The sages say that the sleeping *kundalinī* is composed of three-and-a-half coils or bundles of layers of mental impressions and every bundle may contain a multitude of layers of mental impressions. As every mental impression is uprooted, there comes an awareness that the mind is being unburdened and also perception of the fact that “me” is undergoing a fundamental and permanent change. Every mental impression is connected with some kind of living

being, and every bundle of mental impression conditioning is connected with some beings or some world. Traditional thought proposes that there are four kinds of being or people related to four bundles of mental impression conditioning. The first bundle contains the mental impressions of living creatures, reptiles, birds, plants, beasts, spirits, water beings and so on which are below human beings. The second bundle contains the mental impressions of human beings and the lower divine worlds. The third and fourth bundles contain the mental impressions of higher deities and universal deities respectively. It is the order of nature that in meditation the mental impressions of the lower levels are the first to come up to be gradually uprooted. The nature of the first bundle is passion, sentiment. The nature of the second bundle is thought-oriented, image-making. In the human world thought arrogantly claims itself to be capable of solving each and every problem of one's self and of the whole *universe*, but in fact it cannot — through meditation, through emptying, there will occur small gaps between the image-making thoughts that arise in the mind, and then we will have gone beyond the human world. Thus, the gap between image-making thoughts will gradually get wider, and the chains of image-making will become shorter, and so the process of emptying will steadily continue. The nature of the third bundle of mental impressions is clear, with no image-making, no chattering, no distracting thoughts. Here advanced meditators will enjoy a kind of happiness all the time, even while observing pleasant or painful feelings and sensations in the body-mind complex. At this level, the work of meditation becomes easier, but "I"ness remains, and there

is also the possibility that some *siddhis* or psychic powers such as clairvoyance may arise, though some will find no such arising until absolute emptying has been achieved. The nature of the fourth bundle of mental impressions is “is”ness without “I”ness, and there is no ignorance and no sorrow. And at this fourth level comes the full blossoming of compassion. Such a person attains great saintliness. Beyond that there is nothing, there is the revelation of supreme intelligence.

The three-and-a-half coils of kundalinī represent this evolution of consciousness. The fourth coil is called a half coil because there is no ignorance and sorrow in a human being at that stage of evolution. Kundalinī, that is consciousness, is energy; everything is energy. The literal meaning of kundalinī, “coiled”, indicates energy trapped, bound in conditioning, and thus the uprooting of mental impressions is the awakening of kundalinī, the awakening of intelligence. The sleeping kundalinī leads to the multiplication and perpetuation of sorrow and the awakened kundalinī leads to absorption, that is *nirvāna*, enlightenment. And the absolute absorption of consciousness with the complete ending of the fourth (or half) coil, may be experienced as a kind of energy arising from the bottom of the backbone and moving upward — through the backbone — towards the top of the head and finally being absorbed into nothing; this is also called the awakening of kundalinī. Note that this absolute absorption may be experienced differently by yogis or meditators. So we have three aspects: sleeping, that is becoming; awakening, that is ending; and the absolute absorption of kundalinī.

It is very easy to know what sensations are and how to observe them. Body and mind are an integrated whole. Although they are experienced through the body, sensations constitute one of the four sections of the mind. The action of the mind comprises four broad stages or processes that come into being one after another and work in sequence. The mind is a highly complicated and very fast-working piece of machinery, but it is all very simple. The mind comes into being at every moment from void, zero or emptiness, from moment to moment, and merges into emptiness at every moment. This can be clearly observed in the practice of steady awareness of sensations and feelings. The four stages are: *vijñāna* (contact-cognition), *samjñā* (perception-recognition), *vedanā* (sensation) and *samskāra* (reaction-desire-creation of a mental impression). As there are six senses, there are six *vijñānas*. Thus, when there is sensory contact with something, for example a sound or a thought that comes to us, then it is *vijñāna* that registers that something is there. Then comes the second mechanism, *samjñā*, which recognises what the thing is and evaluates whether it is positive or negative, with reference to mental impressions already recorded in the mind. This is the functioning of *samjñā*. It is not reaction, not desire. Then comes the third mechanism, the sensation or *vedanā*, which occurs according to the recognition and evaluation at *samjñā*. Since there can be different recognition and evaluation at *samjñā*, different *vedanās* can occur for the same object. Up to this point this is a natural process which cannot be stopped, but the fourth, desire or reaction (*samskāra*), can be stopped when there is steady attention upon the sensation

(vedanā) so that there is no recording of that vedanā but its existing seed in samjñā it is also uprooted once and for all, and thus there occurs purification of samjñā, i.e. the awakening of intelligence. The first vijnāna mechanism is naturally pure and uncontaminated. In other words, recognition and evaluation at samjñā is relative and conditioned by time, and can vary. Thus, this inbuilt sensory knowledge as sensations and feelings may vary from person to person. However, when desire is stopped and instead there is attention to sensations and feelings, this attention itself is pure and uncontaminated. Further, intelligence is focused there on its own, so there is no recording of these sensations and feelings and accordingly the emptying of consciousness from samjñā as well. Thus the consciousness is becoming emptied, cleansed. There have been many sages who have delved into the mind and come up with answers, some good, some not so good, but the greatest sages such as the Buddha have explored the mechanism of the mind and given us the correct answers. We are deeply indebted to them. Personally, Surajnath is greatly thankful to Siddhartha Buddha, Gorakhnath, Jiddu Krishnamurti and many others, but what he is saying is not a matter of belief, orthodoxy or dependency.

Sensations can be heat, cold, sweating, heart beating, scratching, dryness, hunger, roughness, itching, pulsing, tension, stretching, jerking, stroking, vibrating, pain, pleasure, burning, like an insect's bite, contractions, like ants creeping, tingling, erotic feelings, throbbing, moving, breaking, tearing, withering, exploding, pressure, flowing, flooding, lightness, heaviness, or those which are neither

pleasant or painful, somewhat like the flow of a strong wind etc., all of which are actually experienced in the body and mind. Sensations demand our attention. Some demand physical action, as in the case of hunger, sickness or a full bladder. However, even though every kind of sensation may be actually felt, sometimes sensations such as hunger or sickness can in fact be the illusion of hunger or the illusion of sickness, which in the flame of attention will wither and be uprooted, without any physical action.

Feelings are the essence of sensations; many have declared that it is difficult for ordinary people to observe feelings. However, Surajnath sees very clearly that *anybody* can observe feelings just as easily as sensations. Basically, feelings are also sensations. Every feeling clearly appears on the face, and everybody is consciously or unconsciously quite sensitive as to what happens on the face. Even though it is so simple, if a person is told to observe his feelings, it is possible that he may become puzzled. However, if we closely, diligently and patiently observe the movements and changes of the facial muscles, the movements of our facial skin, our expressions, then in this way we can be observing feelings. The steady awareness of the movements, changes, expressions, sensations of facial muscles and skin is the observation of feelings. There is a knack to this, which comes with a little practice. As we observe our feelings we automatically and naturally become aware of various sensations in the body, and thus meditation flowers easily, naturally and sweetly. Feelings are anger, fear, sexual desire, greed, hatred, envy, revenge, craziness, violence, brutality, racial hatred, pain, pleasure, questioning, personal problems,

doubt, suspicion, pondering, weighing, judging, justifying, expecting, desiring, care, affection, love, compassion, feeling energetic or weak, depression, jealousy, worry, idleness, freshness, lightness, hurry, shallowness, remorse, attraction, repulsion, melancholy, guilt, heaviness, sickness, tiredness, roughness, dullness, tension, stress, shyness, sadness, competitiveness, comparison, ambition, happiness, pride, devotion, peacefulness, resentment, agitation, eagerness, or a superiority or inferiority complex. Every emotion, feeling, thought movement of our mind, whether it is pleasing or painful, is a feeling, and, basically, a sensation. Now, when thought and desire become entangled in feeling, this is known as *pravrtti*. As we have many feelings, there will be more or less intense entanglements based on attraction or repulsion. Fear, anger, hatred, worry and so on are all intimately related. To observe feelings steadily without letting the mind become involved with them is meditation.

The operation of the mind is one unitary movement — and every feeling affects the whole of the body and mind. With a change in feeling there is a change in breathing, heart beat, pulse, body chemistry, voice etc. There can be countless variations in our sensations and feelings. There is an important point to note here: that although sensations and feelings are present throughout the body, feelings manifest clearly in the face, and the centre of the upper lip is a natural point which remains vibrating with some kind of sensation all the time. All other sensations are always changing, always in flux, but this point on the upper lip remains gently vibrating all the time. There can be slight changes in its

intensity but the nature of this vibration remains the same. It may be that different people feel this sensation in the centre of the upper lip, some may experience it as a mild burning or pulsing, stickiness, ants creeping or like an electric current. Well, in any case, observation of what is with freedom from the known is fundamental. With some people this awareness comes readily, while for others it may take a little time — for some people it is a matter of minutes, for others it may be hours or even days — for it to be awakened, but once awakened it remains awake nearly all the time, so that whenever the attention is directed to it we are aware of it. This is a natural and easy way to help attain mental steadiness, and to remain steady, alert and aware of feelings and sensations. This is a very important point, and the understanding of this is bound to come with the actual practice of meditation.

As a thought arises in the mind, see it, just observe it, and it stops, and observe the feelings and sensations that accompany it, observe every feeling. The truth is that nearly everyone's mind is so heavily conditioned and burdened that there is hardly a gap between thoughts. Furthermore, thoughts will arise again and again; for instance, thought may try to resolve conflict, but in fact it will intensify conflict, intensify feelings — thought is the cause of conflict, sorrow. Do not suppress thoughts. Do not follow the thoughts or give importance to feelings, just remain steadily aware of feelings.

Some people may experience a state when no chains of thought arise in the mind, as they steadily contemplate an

image of light, colour, a star, a photo etc., or repeat some word or mantra, and they may have the mistaken understanding that the thoughts have ceased, at least for some time. However, when they discard the image or word they have been contemplating and observe the stream of the mind, when they simply observe feelings and sensations, for instance the shrill sound of insects or the sensation at the centre of the upper lip, it will be seen that in fact the chains of thoughts will still keep running on. Their mistaken understanding is ended. We should maintain an attitude of disinterested or choiceless enquiry. Thought will always try to come in and interfere in many ways, it may try to override our awareness and dissipate mental energy into subjective time. We must be awake and alert so as to recognise this dissipation, stop this mental wandering, and meditate. Give no importance to thoughts, let them go, and give all importance to feelings and the sensation at the upper lip. Further, when we seriously meditate during waking hours, meditation automatically enters into our sleep and our dreams. Meditation is not restricted by any regulations or formalities; it is intelligence, free of everything. Solitude, however, is of help in order to work and to penetrate deeply; it is of help for the flowering of meditation — and one may find solitude in one's room or on a crowded bus.

Nature does not distinguish between householder and monk. Renunciation is necessary, but renunciation means understanding the law of the creation and emptying of mental impressions so that one lives out of emptiness. The very emptying is emptiness. Renunciation does not mean a monk's clothing or a begging bowl, it does not mean living

like a poor man or a rich man. When we have right understanding we can be a renunciant in our home, in a town, in a jungle or anywhere. Being a monk can be of help in order to work seriously for long hours, but that does not mean that a monk should or should not leave his or her family home or society.

There is no danger to the reproduction of our species if some men and women remain unmarried in order to undertake the very serious work of meditation. However, this definitely does not mean that householders cannot meditate seriously. We may adjust our daily lives in such a way that we act righteously and seriously pursue the work of meditation. Belief has no place in spiritual practice, which demands faith, patience and doubt. Faith means loyalty to facts, to the truth. It also means the passion to know the truth. We should be properly sceptical. The genuinely spiritual mind is free, open and uninhibited, whereas the conventionally religious mind is divided, enclosed, self-deceiving, and in conflict: it may ventilate its enclosure with small open windows, but it does not come clear of the duality of observer and observed, of the ego-centre and the periphery of created images. The conventionally religious mind desires to corrupt, poison or destroy everything that does not suit its ideology. For example, some have corrupted the spiritual work of Buddha, Gorakhnath, and now they are trying to do the same to Jiddu Krishnamurti. Some have burned or distorted many valuable things. History reveals many examples of conventionally religious stupidities and deceptions throughout the world. There are many beautiful religious buildings — mosques, churches, temples — in which people have invested much

time and energy, but they are used in blind faith to offer flattering prayers, worship, rituals etc. in the name of God or gods or saints. The books, idols, pictures they contain are the products of thought. Some of their meditative idols or pictures are really very beautiful, but the sense of beauty is vitiated because of the beliefs, worship etc. Often they have very inspiring devotional singing or chanting that stir the mind and induce a feeling of peace, but this is overlaid with blind beliefs. Insight into spirituality can be gained when these buildings are used in the right way; a meditator can quietly use them wherever possible with understanding.

The process of contacting objects through the senses and the ensuing phases of recognition and sensation is a natural and normal one: it is desire that is the problem, because desire — which is attraction and repulsion — is the unbalanced movement of the mind, as a result of which mental impressions are recorded in the psyche. Desire and thought go together. However, the fourth stage or mechanism (*samskāra*), the operation of desire, can be stopped, and we can remain attentive towards feelings or sensations. In other words, if we are aware of how desire arises, that is, if we are attentive towards feelings or sensations, then there is no recording but emptying. Emptying is the ending of the known, of greed, envy, fear and so on. In this the mind is always fresh and innocent, but this innocence is not ignorance.

Steady awareness, that is, attention towards “what is”, and reasoning (thinking, contemplating, pondering, discriminating, analysing etc., applying thought and

intellect) are basically different. Attention implies freedom, and thought can also be free and rational. However, thought by nature is a kind of energy that is not capable of uprooting mental impressions. The operation of thought is about things that have become known, whether right or wrong, and have become a part of memory. Thought is a movement of the known, whether it be through suppressing, escaping, avoiding, modifying, intensifying, projecting, pacifying, calculating and so on. Thought can create order in science, mathematics and so on, but this belongs to the field of measurement. Thought, that is intellect, is measurement, but it is always directed and limited; it is subjective time. The action of attention is direct and beyond subjective time.

Any mental or physical action, whether right or wrong, arising out of desire and thought is bound to breed pleasurable or painful mental impressions, which may bear fruit immediately, or at some other time in this life-span or possibly in a future life. Some mental impressions are capable of giving birth to a bundle of consciousness as this or that kind of being. This is causation. However, rebirth is an ego-soothing idea, and not a fact; the continuous merging in and sharing with nature and the global stream of consciousness is actuality. Our physical death is our total merging with the stream of life, beyond the known. Meditation is also mental action, but of a fundamentally different nature; it is beyond reward and punishment because it works from beyond desire-thought, it works out of emptiness. Meditation is directly uprooting, cleansing us of mental impressions and going beyond. The mental and spiritual evolution we gain from meditation is irrevocable,

the mind does not fall back from the level it has attained, the mind does not gather back the mental impressions it has emptied because of intrinsic learning. The meditating mind will use desire and thought whenever necessary in daily life, such as satisfying thirst, learning a language or working in some field. Some people may be dull, they may have very little desire and thought, but dullness itself is sorrow and so there is perpetuation of sorrow. It could be said that the passion for meditation is also a kind of desire. Well, that is true, but it is altogether different. It is silent desire, or it is the silence of desire. Meditation is the silent movement of cosmic energy.

Although every being is a separate entity and apparently different from all other beings, fundamentally every being is exactly the same with respect to matter, mind, feelings, sensations, thoughts, sorrow, anger, fear, greed, desire, violence, envy, care, sympathy, pity, affection, compassion, reason, logic, impermanence — which are all basically the same in every being. And attention, which is unbroken steady movement, is void, zero, nothingness, neither mine nor yours — there is no “me”ness or “you”ness, no psychological division; it is a part of cosmic order, cosmic movement. In other words, although we are separate individuals, life is not “I”, it is “we”, and deep down it is movement in emptiness, which is sacred, so look at what you live.

II – MEDITATION IS MOVEMENT IN SILENCE

Thinking about meditation is not meditation. Thought cannot remain with the present, thought cannot know “what is”. Thought is movement, the momentum of past and future through the present. It is the past modifying itself in the present and projecting itself into the future.¹ In meditation, thought, which is past, meets the present, and dissolves. The past, i.e. mental impressions, is present in nearly everybody as a result of the coincidence of one’s deeds and *karma*, the universal law of reward and punishment, and this accumulation is sorrow. Further, we have the choice between remaining conditioned by some ideology or beliefs, which is thought conditioning, or becoming a free and well-balanced human being. It is what we do now that matters the most. *If the past is not transformed in the flame of meditation, it is going to perpetuate itself.* Either we can listen and read with

¹ “The present is of the highest importance; the present, however tragic and painful, is the only door to Reality. The future is the continuance of the past through the present; through understanding the present is the future transformed. The present is the only time for understanding for it extends into yesterday and into tomorrow. The present is the whole of time; in the seed of the present is the past and the future; the past is the present and the future is the present. The present is the Eternal, the Timeless.”

— J. Krishnamurti, Authentic Report of Sixteen Talks Given in 1945 and 1946, p31, in Susunaga Weeraperuma (compiler), 1989, Sayings of J. Krishnamurti. Bombay, Chetana, p195

a free, discriminating, fresh mind, or we can stay with the past, that is, with beliefs, ideologies, personal ideals, the dogmas of conventional religions etc. “Conventional religions” refers to those religions proposing formalised righteousness, compulsory do’s and don’ts, those playing on popular religious sentiment and creating violent passions, and those proposing some kind of worship, prayers, idolatry, flattery, rituals and so on in the name of religious or spiritual work or, in other words, becoming religions (*bhava dharmas*), for thought itself is becoming. While reading through this book, the nature of religion and the many conventional religions will become clear — but above all, it is meditation that is capable of shattering every false thing that appears in the name of religion. Personal ideals in our day-to-day living or our involvement with such matters as arts, politics, science, society and literature are fine when adhered to with a free and thoughtful mind, with righteousness, but personal ideals² in the name of religion,

² “Ideals are merely a means of postponing, an excuse to avoid bringing about a real change. So long as we have an ideal, there is always a conflict between what is and what should be, and we spend a great deal of energy in this inward conflict, through which we hope to bring about a fundamental change. If we are envious, we set up the ideal of non-envy, hoping thereby to free the mind from envy. But if you examine closely this whole process, you will see that the ideal actually prevents the understanding of what is, which is envy. So the ideal is not important, it is an impediment, a thing to be put away completely.”

— J. Krishnamurti, Talks by Krishnamurti in Europe 1956,
pp12-13, in Weeraperuma, op. cit., p88

God, are bound to be a deviation into something intellectual. Meditation is not a thing; it is nothing; it is silence or movement in silence. There is no other way to describe it. There can be communication but not communion if one is listening according to what is past, because it is the past that is operating, not the present. Similarly, we can observe steadily and continuously or we can become caught up in calculating, judging and measuring intellectually.

Thought is the transitory material process of the brain, which is a part of consciousness, and is therefore not capable of effecting order in or transformation of the contents of consciousness. The contents of a jug and the jug are different, but the contents of consciousness are themselves consciousness, and human consciousness has the ability steadily to observe itself, to observe the mental impressions that arise. Let us put it the other way around: the body is the replica of consciousness; and apart from the body, consciousness comprises thoughts, desires, feelings, sensations and awareness. When awareness is associated with thoughts and desires, when awareness becomes thoughts and desires, then we have the recording or filling in, the impression, of the related feelings and sensations; but when awareness is steadily aware of feelings or sensations, then we have the emptying of feelings and sensations, and in this there is such an unconditioned learning that the mind will no longer record those feelings and sensations once they are eliminated. To go on emptying is the way of intelligence, and in this we have the gradual unconditioned irrevocable evolution of consciousness. Basically, there are only

sensations and awareness, and they are related, both go together, there is no awareness apart from sensations.

Thought — thinking, reasoning, calculating, judging, weighing, contemplating, discriminating, analysing — is measure, it is the process of the intellect. Thought is intellect. Thought is subtle matter, or more correctly it is a process, an activity going on in matter, in the brain. Intellect is a kind of energy, a kind of intelligence that by nature is not capable of breaking and transforming mental impressions. Intelligence, that is attention, is a different kind of energy, it is the present, it is remaining with “what is”. It penetrates deep into the consciousness and works on psychological blocks and mental impressions. It releases the blockages in the capabilities of the intellect — thinking, imagining, judging and so on. The intellect can be developed in different fields, it can be free and critical, but that is not the emptying of sorrow. Intelligence can use the intellect, but the intellect cannot know or touch intelligence. Attention, which is steady awareness of “what is”, is altogether a different kind of action; it is causeless. It is intelligence that operates in attention. Attention can either be focused on something or it can remain steadily aware of both inner and outer events without focusing on them. Attention or intelligence is emptiness, nothing, immense energy; it is beyond measure. It works independently of thought. However, thought works alongside intelligence in daily life, communicating, and being involved with food, shelter, arts, science and so on.

[In other words, we need to understand the matter of “*physical measure*”, “*mental measure*” and “*no measure*”.

Physical measure involves technical or scientific knowledge that we need in our daily life, and the nature of this measure or scale is normal or common among us; further, understand the matter of “mental measure” as from our ideas or thinking, which is subjective measure or scale and a need in our daily life while being free from traditions and beliefs, despite we sense how it can be different from person to person, how it goes mingling and effecting all of our relations; then, above all, understand the matter of “no measure”, that is, freedom from measuring as a whole, (freedom from the known by knowing its place in daily life and its limit otherwise or the alakh sense), and observation of what is, meditation. No measure can use thinking but not vice versa. No measure is emptiness! Our name or a sense of “I”, me is but a functional necessity in daily life, otherwise we need to understand that emptiness is the crux psychologically. — This paragraph is put in bracket simply because, being a late addition, it could not be got edited for linguistic purpose from Bhagavan Nath or Rosemerry Nath.]

Simply listening to the sounds around us — the wind blowing, insects buzzing, traffic noise etc. — is meditation. Here too there is attention towards “what is”. In listening, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting etc. there is a balancing of in and out. Sometimes we may simply listen, or simply see the beauty of the sea, sky and nature around us attentively without naming or describing it. This does not mean that the meditating mind cannot describe nature; it can, but there is no need to chatter all the time. However, most meditation work should be in the consciousness itself, attending to feelings and the sensation at the centre of the upper lip. This

does not mean that the mind will not wander into thoughts — it will, again and again, *but the very awareness of non-attention is attention*: the awareness of non-attention is the immediacy of attention. And when you are meditating seriously, when there is constant and regular immediacy of attention, the wandering habit of the mind undergoes a change. It does not matter how often your mind wanders away into thoughts. What matters is how serious you are in returning to attention, to meditation, and how diligently you observe, say, this evervibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, and your feelings and sensations — this is *the important skill*.

Attention has been likened to a steadily burning lamp casting its light around about itself. Attention can be focused on the face or the sensations in the body. However, the movement of the mind is tremendously fast, awareness can move very quickly, further, attention has an infinite capacity for perception. Attention is thus far more than a lamp. When we meditate we can achieve concentration but there is no avoiding of other perceptions such as sounds. It is very important to understand this because one can get the wrong idea about meditation. *Simply speaking, meditation is attention to feelings or sensations.* To meditate does not mean neglecting our daily work. Attention will see and avoid or easily overcome mishaps or accidents, but a mind that is not attentive can easily become a victim to mishaps — or can even invite them. Life is movement in relationship and one must be sensitive and steady. Deceitful thinking can blunt sensitivity, free and unbiased thinking can enhance sensitivity, but nevertheless the energy of thought is by

nature limited. We may change from unrighteousness to righteousness any time, or we may pretend to righteousness, quietness. Sensitivity sees this and meditation comes to remedy it; meditation is the key to open up, expose and dissolve every problem, every mental impression. Generally speaking, meditation is, as we have said, observation of "what is", steady awareness of "what is", but practically speaking meditation is observation, steady awareness of feelings or sensations. Observation of feelings implies observation of facial and bodily gestures and sensations — they are all one whole. We will also be aware of the words and pictures that arise in the mind but we should attach no importance to them.

The meditating mind knows that becoming entangled in thought intensifies pain and misery, for it involves the escaping, suppressing and avoiding of "what is". This is transitory. And in just observing without any choice, i.e. without any desire or attraction or repulsion, there is a transformation of "what is", i.e. transformation of the mental image. The flame of attention will heat and boil and dry up, break and uproot mental impressions. The meditating mind becomes aware that layer after layer of mental impressions, layers of feelings and sensations arise and wither. The flame of attention is not hot or cold, light or dark. It cannot be described although it is perfectly simple; not the feeling of silence but silence itself cannot be described. Words can be used as a springboard for the jump to go beyond words and do the actual work of meditation. However, words, thoughts, thinking about meditation are not meditation. Quite simply, while meditating we should focus all our attention on our

feelings in our facial expressions along with the sensation at the centre of the upper lip. Other sensations and tensions may arise in our head and other parts of our body. Remain with those tensions without strain, but continue giving your full attention to feelings in the face and to the sensation at the centre of the upper lip so that your meditation stays easy and natural. You will perceive the release of locked energy, i.e. mental impressions, as withering or breaking. The breaking is mostly experienced in our head, but sometimes in the neck or elsewhere. This does not mean we should hold parts of our body, such as arms or legs, in tense and uncomfortable positions. We should adjust our body when needed, understanding our body's wisdom.

Some thoughts in the form of words or pictures may continue to arise, such as hatred, anger and fear, but the meditating mind will find such thoughts start to lose their potency, until some day they will have lost it altogether, and are no longer burning inside. Many have said that to observe every thought that comes into the mind is meditation. To observe thoughts actually means to observe the feelings inherent in them. If you simply try to observe thoughts, the movement of words and pictures, there is the possibility of becoming caught up in them or of remaining shallow and superficial. *There is no deep penetration in simply observing thoughts*, no natural flowering of meditation.

We all can easily observe feelings and sensations. Feelings are very clear in our facial changes and everybody is naturally sensitive to the face. Facial changes and expressions are feelings, the essence of sensations. Facial

changes may be pleasing or painful, obvious or subtle, ugly or strange, they may change rapidly or slowly, but observe them and all else steadily. When meditating, the eyes should remain naturally and easily steady; however, there may be small movements of the eyeballs and eyelids even when the eyes are closed. “Facial changes” refers to changes of expression in the cheeks, lips, chin, nose, eyebrows, forehead and neck; and of course bodily gestures are also related to facial changes. Be as simple and open as a child and let your feelings flower, but do not be childlike by reacting with attraction or repulsion to them, whether openly or subtly. Nature has provided us with a point on the face that is clearly vibrating with some kind of sensation all the time. This point is in the centre of the upper lip. It may take a little time, some minutes, or even hours or days to awaken because of a lack of sensitivity or possibly because of a lack of the simplicity to know “what is”. Every thought, feeling and sensation in the brain, face and body is bound to change sooner or later, being impermanent, but the vibrating sensation in the upper lip goes on without change. Steady awareness of this sensation leads to the strengthening and deepening of mental steadiness, moving directly into the stream of the mind (because basically the stream of the mind is sensations), so even awareness of this sensation is meditation; then it will become easy and natural to observe feelings. While observing feelings closely you may also be aware of this sensation, and sometimes not. Whenever you feel that the mind is running away all over the place, or you feel the need for mental steadiness, then simply and calmly observe this sensation and the associated feelings. To

penetrate deeply into the mind is to observe our feelings. Thus, being aware of the sensation at the centre of the upper lip can be of practical help for shifting the attention to the face and its changes — it can be of help in the natural flowering of meditation. Putting it in other words, focusing on this vibrating sensation at the upper lip will help us to observe feelings and sensations steadily, and this can be done not only initially but at all times. The close and continuous observation of this sensation is itself meditation. And whenever you feel agitated or diverted, which themselves are kinds of feeling and should be emptied, when you find that these agitations or diversions are so powerful and distracting that you are not getting anywhere, and you feel such a need for smoothness in your meditation, then at these times give all your attention to this sensation at the upper lip, give little or no attention to feelings, and you will find that your meditation goes easily and smoothly; mental impressions will be being emptied and you will be achieving a breakthrough. We may need to meditate like this many times. The mind constantly wanders in thoughts, but this wandering away, or non-attention, and attention are not opposites of each other, they are fundamentally different. The very awareness of non-attention is attention. Further, you can even narrow down the area of awareness at the central part of the upper lip to a pin-point so that you observe a single minute atom vibrating there — arising and passing from moment to moment. This may lead to a sharpening of sensitivity, in which your attention is not limited to this pinpoint, but naturally extends to your face, head, body or nature around you more closely. This is not a matter of

belief, it just has to be tried out. Feelings and sensations can be observed with the eyes open or closed, depending on your situation, for observation is a mental activity.

There are various ways of observing sensations, such as observing sensations as and where these occur, or observing the whole of the body point by point rapidly or slowly again and again, or some specific point, such as the centre of the upper lip, and then becoming aware of other sensations in the body and face as they arise. But for the easy and natural flowering of meditation the important thing is observation of feelings. Feelings are the essence of sensations, and as we observe our feelings we automatically and naturally become aware of various sensations in the body. And, needless to say, as feelings are emptied, the related sensations are also emptied automatically and naturally — for mind is “holomovement”, i.e. mind is all interrelated movement. Most of the time we do not need to focus on our body to observe sensations: we should simply remain aware of our feelings in our facial expressions and of the upper lip sensation and thus our meditation will go easily and naturally. The meditating mind experiences the uprooting of mental impressions, the emptying of the mind, in the arising and withering of feelings and sensations, and sometimes this may be experienced as tearing, cracking, bubbling, stroking, streaming, exploding sensations in the head, neck, stomach or other parts of the body. The meditating mind may sometimes experience things such as flashing lights, bright spots, colours, sounds, dream-like ruined or grand buildings, saintly, angelic or divine beings, sometimes moving in space with or without conscious control, or various good or bad

scenes related to fear, greed, envy etc. These are your own conscious or unconscious accumulations and reactions, i.e., recorded thoughts, feelings, sensations. At such times calmly observe the associated feelings and sensations. Meditation will come into your sleep and your dreams naturally when you are seriously mediating while awake, and also meditating while going to sleep. To do serious meditation is not some kind of mental burden — the work of meditation is arduous but simple. In sleep, the surface layers of the mind are comparatively silent, and so the deeper layers rise so as to bring order to the depths of the mind. The effort by thought to bring order to itself while awake or asleep is not true order — it may be a partial ordering, but the order that is achieved through meditation is unconditioned and irrevocable.

Insight into meditation has been a problem for most readers of Jiddu Krishnamurti, even with those who lived with him and listened to him in person; Surajnath too had this problem. To understand and live Krishnamurti's religious teachings, which speak of right religious living, you may need to work over this text, that is, work over the way of meditation presented here, and see the easy, sweet and natural beauty of meditation and life. This is not a boast, nor should you believe it; rather, examine it. Discover that "the observer is the observed", and insight into this and going beyond involves not a thought or a concept, but moment to moment observation of "what is" — that is the reality of meditation work. In other words, observation reveals that the observer, the ego and its reactions to all other feelings, of greed, envy, anger, fear, sympathy, care etc. It reveals that

the observer is the observed, and this insight radically changes the very structure of your consciousness, and you then know what it is to live beyond the ego centre and thinking. You know what it is to live with emptiness. The very observation of “what is” is emptiness, in other words, there is the awakening of sacredness.

III – FREEDOM AND DYING TO THE KNOWN

We should be careful to eat the right kind of food, that is, the right quality and quantity of food, according to the body's needs. Our food requirements are determined by the kind of work we do, our age, state of health and allergies and the climate. Milk and milk products, food grains such as wheat, millet or rice, pulses etc., vegetables, eggs, fruit, honey etc. — all these are good food. However, for some people, and at different seasons, some of the vegetables, food grains etc. may not be appropriate. We should be careful and sensitive to the suitability of various foods. Ideally, we should avoid killing and eating meat, but it is a fact that meat and fish are used as food by many human beings and they cannot be stopped altogether. It is preferable for a serious meditator to have a small meal or just a little light food in the evening. This is not only good for health but it also helps to deepen our meditation. There is no need to worry if a meditator feels like less sleep, as such a state is bound to occur. Observe the body's intelligence, what the body needs and what greed and wrong habits demand. We should avoid alcohol, drugs and tobacco. These things are very harmful to the body and mind.³ Whatever we eat, drink or consume in any way has an effect upon our feelings and sensations and finds its way

³ āphū khāya bhāngi bhasakāvai, tā māī akali kahā tāī āvai,
caṛhatā pitta ūtaratā bāī, tātāī gorakha bhāngi na khāī. (208)

Taking opium, drinking bhang, what's the sense in that?
Passions arise, prana is weakened, so Gorakh does not drink bhang.

into our thoughts, which are then recorded in the mind and become part of it. These things are thus very harmful for meditation, as we cannot penetrate deep into the mind because of the rough layers of conditioning they create. They cause degeneration of body and mind. Some drugs or alcohol may boost the mind's sensitivity for a time, but this is followed by degeneration. The wisdom of the body works as it should when it is not polluted by the things it ingests. Doctors can be good guides with regard to food and health, provided they are sincere and sensitive and not given to boasting of their skills.

Broadly speaking there are three kinds of food that the body and mind can consume and about which we need to be careful. The first is the various things we take into the body through drinking, eating, smelling etc.; the second is the physical environment, including the climate, in which we live; the third is the mental environment, comprising the social environment, ideologies, the books we have read, and also our own thinking.

Our social behaviour should be correct and courteous, depending on the time and situation. Righteousness is the foundation of worldly and spiritual life. Righteousness does not mean hidebound morality or the do's and don'ts of conventional religions and ideologies. Righteousness means being aware of greed, envy, domination and so on in ourselves, and being free, open and responsible. In nearly everybody's mind there is more or less greed, attachment, envy, anger and so on, and it is bound to come up in many ways again and again. Righteousness thus means not giving

into, nor suppressing or avoiding, but steadily observing the greed, envy and so on whenever they come to the mind: this is righteousness, and with it comes a life of freedom, fraternity and responsibility. [In other words, as said by siddhas and buddhas, it is meditation and virtue or *jat sat*.] Thus, we should be responsible for our bodies by ensuring physical fitness, as well as to our family, our work, and to society and nature through learning about the processes of natural and social life.

Simply being righteous is being partially spiritual. Without meditation our spiritual life is incomplete, for meditation is the wholeness of spiritual living. When there is no insight into and practice of meditation, we can be righteous but that righteousness is intellectual and calculated, with no emptying of the mind. Furthermore, righteousness determined by an ideology is not righteousness. Even animals have some sense of righteousness — some live righteously, some live with greed, envy, anger and so on. And it is pretty much the same for human beings as well. Naturally, there are differences in intellectual capacity in different beings. In many respects animals are more sensitive than human beings, and they have some capacity for thinking, even if this may be very little. But the human mind is much more advanced in the matter of thinking, which can be used rightly or wrongly. However, it is meditation that marks the fundamental difference between humans and animals, or, better, between meditating beings and other beings.

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Without freedom the mind cannot be sane and steady: freedom means sanity, *it does not mean choosing to do whatever one feels like — this is not freedom, for here the mind is dominated by memory, thought and all other impressions.* This inner freedom is unconditioned. We can be captured physically, but no person and no power can capture us inwardly unless we give ourselves up to conventional religions, ideologies, beliefs. We have to become free of thought-conditioning, that is, free of all the conventional religions, dogmas, emotional sentiments, fantasies, traditions, concepts of caste, gender, class, race, high and low and so on. Put simply, we are human beings, with our own place in the order of beings in nature. Hence, freedom is intelligence. Thought can be free and sane, but this is fundamentally different from meditating. Thought is related to past and future subjective time, whereas meditation is the present. Meditation can use thought when it is needed but not vice versa.

What is genuine religion? The natural quality of every object, every thing, is its religion. Fire burns, ice is cold, a seed grows, water flows, oxygen is one of the prime life energies and so on — all this is religion. But what is religion in the field of the psyche? What is the cause of conditioning, misery, sorrow? And what is unconditioning? What goes beyond the stream of sorrow? To put it simply, religion is:

When there is either attraction (rāg) or repulsion (dvesh), there is the creation of mental impressions (samskāra), and as a result the perceiving mechanism of the mind gets contaminated, conditioned. The

perceiving mechanism of the mind then perceives, that is, identifies and evaluates, sensory contact in terms of past mental impressions. However, as the recorded mental impressions are steadily removed, the perceiving mechanism of the mind is purified, until all the mental impressions are uprooted and the depth uncovered. When the attention is directed towards feelings or sensations, with freedom from the known by knowing its place and limit, that is, with the alakh sense, there is no recording of mental impressions, only the emptying of mental impressions that have already been recorded. Meditation is the emptying of layer after layer of mental impressions. With this emptying comes awakening, and a deepening of insight into religion, into nature, into the psyche. There is the unfolding of truth. This is a totally different kind of learning from the learning thought knows. Learning and discipline go together. Without the discipline that comes from meditative learning, our lives are bound to remain shallow and superficial. Spiritual learning is free from esoteric or exoteric questions. Every normal human being can do it, can meditate. The way of religion is open to everyone. We see that intellect-oriented conventional religions and ideologies can invent esoteric-exoteric things, and divide men into special and ordinary. While not everybody can be admitted to a school of medicine, occult science, engineering, music and so on, this does not apply to spiritual learning.

Desire and thought, that is “should be, should not be, should have been, should not have been” are becoming: they occur in subjective time. For instance, if you are angry, jealous, afraid or not peaceful, you say to yourself “I should not be angry, I should be peaceful” and so on. The fact is, you are angry, you are not at peace, but thought comes in and imposes a fiction that you should not be angry, worried and so on, which actually is not a fact. The “I”, our ego, is nothing but the thought-emotion of who we think we are and are not, and as thought is always changing, so too this “I”, the ego, is always changing. Thought says “Now I am angry, worried, fearful, but one day I will get over my anger, worries, fears by doing this or that, and then I won’t be angry, worried, fearful.” All this goes on in subjective time, which does not exist apart from thought and desire. In subjective time we suppress, escape or avoid “what is”, that is, fear, anger, worry etc., and project some kind of non-angry, peaceful state, which has no reality apart from thought and desire. In subjective time anger, worry, fear etc. are perpetuated, but in meditation they are transformed. The mental impressions that have been transformed become intelligence. Thought contains different vibrations, but it cannot contain silence. Thought can say, the whole universe is my home, it is one and the same movement, I am one with all etc., but such chattering is bound to remain shallow — it cannot transform sorrow. And thought can realise its limitations and understand its right place in our day-to-day routines of working, learning a technique, earning a living etc. and remain quiet, and even though the murmuring of thoughts may go on, it can give way to attention, i.e.

intelligence, which then becomes focused and works on its own to uproot mental impressions. However, intelligence is very vulnerable — it disappears as thought takes over.

Apart from subjective time, we also experience chronological or physical time, such as morning, evening, the growing of a plant, a child's growing up, the rising and setting of the sun, day, night, years, and we are aware of physical direction, east, west, south, north etc. Time and direction are essential to our daily life, being part of cosmic creation; however, cosmic silence and cosmic ground are free of time and direction.

The emptying of conditioning is dying to the known; the emptying of a mental impression is the death of that mental impression. The emptied conditioning has gone, it is finished. We must experience this death, which happens from moment to moment in meditation. Life and death go together. There is an immense beauty and inner flowering in this death.⁴ With external flowering, such as being a worker, artist, businessman, scientist, or leader, there is great but yet limited scope, and it is impermanent. Inner religious, spiritual flowering, is unconditionally open to everybody, be they poor or rich, worker or leader, man or woman, literate or illiterate. With the death, that is the emptying, of mental impressions comes inward flowering. Without this death, life is the dead past, the perpetuation of sorrow. Without this

⁴ marau ve jogī marau, maraṇa hai mīṭhā,
tisa maraṇī marau, jisa maraṇī gorakha mari dīṭhā. (26)

Die yogi, truly die, dying is sweet.
Die the death Gorakh died, beholding.

death, what survives physical organic death is the bundle of consciousness, that is, the bundle of mental impressions. The bundle of mental impressions, whatever name it is given — I, ego, soul — carries on image-making. Image-making is the reaction to feelings and sensations that happens all the time if we are not attentive, not meditating. At the death of the physical organism, some mental impression will come up from the depths of the mind, relating to any being from the animal, human, spirit or divine worlds, and so the cycle of life goes on. There is no need to speculate about where we go. The appearance of a mental impression is the work of intelligence and thought has no control over it. However, the capacity of meditating, of emptying, is present only in human and divine beings, and not in animals or spirits. There is no need to speculate about invisible or higher divine beings. When we look at the cosmic order we understand its compassionate nature — that whatever knowledge or memory that has been stored in the brain is washed away with the death of the physical organism, and that every new cycle, every new birth, is a new and fresh beginning; it has no past as “me” or “mine”, as traditions or conventional religions or whatever.

There is no point in speculating about heaven or hell or some reward or punishment. Such ideas are merely thought projections. Life is in the here and now. The cosmos has no beginning and no end, though all things in it, animate or inanimate, come and go, arise and pass. So what we do now is of the utmost importance; this is what matters the most, no matter what our past mental impressions and past thought conditioning are. Meditation is the unconditioning and

releasing of locked psychic energy; it is regenerating. The complete emptying of mental impressions is the attainment of the highest level of intelligence — which is no attainment and no level. Before that there can be no knowledge of supreme intelligence, though intellectually we may think we know all about it. Can the supreme intelligence be described as “absolute still silence”, or as the “unmoved mover”, as Socrates put it? Understanding will flow from free and clear thinking, but it is still bound to remain shallow and non-emptying because thought is by nature a limited energy, a lower kind of intelligence. However, the understanding that flows out of meditation goes deeper and deeper into life until the depths are totally opened and there is complete absorption.

There are two aspects of conditioning: the first is being conditioned to mental impressions and the second is being conditioned to thought, that is, traditions, conventional religions, ideologies, beliefs, the ego. We can and must be free from thought conditioning right now, instantly. There is no gradual freeing from thought conditioning. Either we are free from thought conditioning or we are not. However, the emptying of mental impressions demands continuous work — we must meditate just about all the time.⁵ In practice, even

⁵ suṇāū ho devala tajau jañjälā, amiya pīvata taba hoibā bālā,
brahma agani siñcata mūlā, phūlyā phūla kalī phiri phūlā. (87)

Listen priest! Give up those entanglements,
drink the nectar, and become a child;
water the root with the fire of attention,
the flower in blossom will become a bud once more.

when we seriously attempt to meditate, the mind may wander a little. Furthermore, we do not always have the free time or solitude to be able to meditate seriously all the time. We do, after all, have to work for our livelihood. Working and knowing are also kinds of feeling but this *in itself* is not significant as something coming from ego. However, while giving due attention to working and knowing, we shall see that feelings such as anger and worry will occur. We shall therefore experience either some filling in or some emptying of mental impressions. This will depend on how seriously we are meditating in our free time and solitude (solitude means both a lonely place and aloneness — we may even find solitude on a crowded bus). So, we have to work for our livelihood, but we should try to find as much free time as possible for meditation. We can meditate lying in bed, in a sitting posture (*āsana*) or in any way that speeds up the emptying work. Close attention to feelings is essential for the speedy emptying of mental impressions, and furthermore, when we meditate diligently during our free time and also while going to sleep, meditation will enter into our sleep automatically, so that even in sleep the emptying of mental impressions will take place. However, such speedy emptying cannot be expected during our working hours since we have to give due attention to our work and cannot or may not be able to observe feelings so closely, so the rate at which mental impressions are emptied will be slower. In any case, then, we can cultivate a state of meditation while engaged in our work or any other daily activity, simply by being attentive to what we are doing. In fact, we shall find that as we continue working at meditation, the mind will become a

guide to itself, in other words, we shall become a light unto ourselves.

The emptying of mental impressions is by nature gradual. Meditation means freedom, emptying, emptiness. In meditation the recorded feelings and sensations will come to the surface and gently wither away. Sometimes, however, this process may be experienced somewhat violently as a thundering or a roaring, as in a storm, or as some gently repeated breaking, mostly in the head — but in all cases there is emptying, which you actually experience in the body and the mind. Love will flower from free and sane thinking, but the love that flowers from meditation is altogether different, and cannot be known by thought.

The stream of sorrow arises because of ignorance, ego, attraction, repulsion and image-making — this is all one movement. And with attention this whole process undergoes a complete and radical change. Thought is memory, which is past, and it intensifies feelings and sensations. But the action of meditation is beyond cause. When feeling is dominated by desire and thought, the intellect is thus involved and as a consequence there is positive or negative impermanent transitory movement. And when we are steadily aware, directing the attention towards feelings, then it is intelligence that is involved and there is no cause-and-effect chain of reaction but right action. But desire and thought are very deceptive — they will constantly try to interfere, to dominate and take over our feelings. Check it, simply by knowing it, and observe your feelings. Feelings imply sensations, and so observing feelings implies being aware of sensations.

Pious people operating discursively may invent various methods of contemplation in the name of meditation, and may also propose various theories in the name of religion. These people and their blind followers will say all kinds of things in the name of religion, intelligence, God etc. Therefore, we must discover what is the right practice of religion, and for this we need a free, balanced, sensitive, serious, patient, prudent, intelligent mind. A mind like this is the right interior guru or guide, and is capable of searching for and finding the right exterior guide. When we know that we do not know, we are open to knowing; when we know that mentally we were not or are not free, that is freedom; when we know that our knowledge about this or that thing is deficient, then we are being open to knowing. However, meditation is not a matter of choice: meditation is everyone's all-time need.

When thought becomes aware of its limitations, that it cannot simply remain with "what is", cannot transform "what is", then thought has found its right place; then consciousness will perceive how it wanders into thought again and again, and steadily observe feelings. This is attention, and in attention a deeper energy is caught and focused. This deeper inward silent energy, which is intelligence, operates on its own without the intervention of thought. Attention works independently. There are four aspects of meditation: attending, experiencing, emptying and insight. Attending or attention to our feelings is experiencing and emptying. Attention is living the experience so fully, so completely, that there is no recording but instead the emptying and purifying of the recognition mechanism

(samjnā), which is second in sequence. The contact mechanism (vijnāna), which is first in sequence, is naturally pure. Thus, in emptying, the mind goes on purifying itself and evolving. Flashes of insight may come at any time — there is no knowing when.

You drive a car by learning driving skills, how a car works, traffic rules etc.; however, when you drive a car, if you miss attention for a second, you will have an accident. Attention cannot be learned and achieved by any gradual preparation, learning some methodology or science. Thought has no role in learning about and coming to attention. Attention can use thought and its skills in different fields, but not vice versa. Round the other way, inwardly, thought has no potential to behold the movement of feelings as they are and the tremendous speed of sensational waves and learning life beyond the known. Understand this well, and realise the futility of different ways, traditions, beliefs in the name of religion.

The sense of siddhas and buddhas is the way of attention or meditation and virtue, which is not such a difficult thing to understand and to live with. Our ears listen and eyes see, and it is not that somebody else's eyes listen and ears see. That is the part of religion. In attention you are open to learning the infinite depths and mysteries of life.⁶

⁶ abhacch� imarita sabadakā pāṇī, khedā khedī ragatra kari jāṇī,
nātha kahai yaha gyāna anūpa, dekhati draṣṭi na paḍie kūpa. (303)

The water of the word is ambrosia not yet drunk,
learn about pain and sorrows in the blood.

Nath says, this wisdom is peerless,
look, behold, don't fall in the pit.

— From Gorakh Sabadi, The Sayings of Gorakh Nath, edited and translated by Yogi Surajnath and Bhagavan Nath, 2022.

IV – THOUGHT AND MEDITATION: OBSERVER, OBSERVED AND OBSERVATION

People are always talking about energy, material energy, psychic energy, spiritual energy and so on. What is energy? Possibly it cannot be defined, but it can be sensed, it can be perceived in its operation and manifestation. Every object has certain qualities or capacities, and these constitute its energy. Gold is yellow, precious; a seed grows, becomes old and dies; animals, human beings use intellect, think, reason etc.: all this is energy. Everything is energy, energy taking one form or another. Every action needs energy. Poison and medicine, thinking and meditating are energy. The wind blowing, birds singing, fish swimming, a child crying: all this is energy. Every activity is energy. Different structures, forms, qualities, colours, tones, sounds, thoughts, feelings, sensations are energy.

We think about our daily activities, our work, clothing, food etc., or we have ideas about religion, ideologies, theories, politics etc. We think, and in thinking there is a gathering of energy. Thought can gather tremendous energy; it can divide or unite people; it can make warfare or discuss peace. From where does thought gain this energy? Thought can analyse, judge, infer, discriminate, plan etc., all of which is energy. In the external, technological sense, thought can construct buildings, bridges, spacecraft and so on — this is what thought is meant to do. But what about the subjective or inner field? Here thought can be right or wrong, it can

suppress, escape or avoid “what is”, which may be anger, fear, desire, envy and so on, and project something; but it cannot uproot or transform the inner psychological problem, the anger, the fear and so on. Thought believes that it can control, but controlling breeds disorder, just as non-controlling breeds disorder. From a physical standpoint, control is necessary for walking, standing, working, eating etc., but inwardly, control or non-control is a problem, for both are thought. It is clear that thought has not solved human problems. Thought has made great strides in exploring the material field, but it has not solved problems in human relationships despite all its calculations, reasoning and so on. Thought is not capable of seeing the truth directly, because it is based on what is past. It has created ideologies and religions, but for all this the human problem has become worse, minds are deteriorating, men are at each other's throats like dogs. And it can be seen that in the mental field as well, thought gathers tremendous energy, either righteously or unrighteously. Even so, the universal law of karma continues to work at every moment on every body, whether on an individual or a collective body such as a race, a caste, a political group, a professional organization or an ideological body formed in the name of religion, politics etc., bringing reward or punishment for righteous and unrighteous work respectively. Thought creates this or that kind of body and is then stuck with it.

The mechanism of thought, through words and pictures, occupies only a small part of the brain. Even so, thought postulates itself as all-important and becomes involved with every operation of the mind in the false search for emotional

or psychological security through ideas. It undergoes the movement of attraction or repulsion, and thus falls into the vicious trap of conscious or unconscious imitation in the name of religion. Meditation is the breaking of imitation. Observation of what we are — and psychically we are constantly changing, as our feelings, sensations, thoughts are always changing — is not imitation. Observation of “what is” is intelligence, and through this, if we are open and serious about understanding and doing it, we surely can be of help to others as well.

Desire is one kind of feeling, which is either attraction or repulsion. And being moved by desire towards other feelings such as anger, fear, affection and worry is tendency (*pravrtti*), which is the cause of mental impressions (*samskāras*). In other words, reacting with desire is to react with that particular feeling towards other feelings. Meditation is to stop desire and observe every feeling, including desire (and reactions to desire) that arise in our mind. Tendencies are a normal feature of our minds, such as feeling the need to drink water, to exercise and so on. Even sleep and memory are tendencies. Being aware of one’s need and being aware of greed is intelligence—that is, we need to eat, but we also need to avoid excess; and while eating we should meditate, being steadily aware of taste, of chewing, swallowing etc. Desire-thought always results in sorrow, sometimes more, sometimes less, even if the mental impressions it creates are beneficial. Meditation is goodness. Goodness is not a matter of degree — you cannot have more good or less good. More good or less good is actually less bad or more bad. Bad has no relationship with good, but

good does have a relationship with bad, and the relationship of good to bad is one of compassion, love.⁷

Meditation is something the mind can do: to “what is”, simply listening, seeing and observing feelings and sensations is meditation. In meditation there is no measure, no calculation, analysing, judging — nothing. It is void, zero, hence the completeness of mental energy, an energy beyond measure, which is therefore a higher kind of intelligence. Thought is measure and so it can never reach the level of attention. Attention is an energy that is capable of breaking the disordered brain cell connections and eradicating mental impressions entrenched throughout the whole body-mind complex. Thought is “I/me”, observer and observed. Thought moves rapidly between observer and observed. The “I/me” thought associates and separates itself from every feeling and thought — this is the movement of identification with images of me, not me, mine, not mine, should be, should not be. But in attention the movement or distinction between observer and observed ceases, and there is simply observation. Observation is not intellect, it is intelligence, a higher kind of energy. And this energy is capable of solving human sorrow, human mental problems, through the emptying of what has been known of greed,

⁷ उजला मिना सदा राहि जला माई, सुकरा सदा मलिना,
अतामा ग्याना दया बिनी कचु नाही, कहा भयाउ ताना क्षिणा. (240)

A clean fish always lives in water,
a pig is always dirty –
knowledge of the self is no good without compassion.
Why did you waste your body!

attachment, envy, fear, resentment and so on. This does not mean the emptying of the kinds of knowledge we need in our daily lives, such as technical or practical knowledge. Our brains may forget technical or practical knowledge if it is not used or maintained, but psychological states, such as greed, pride, envy, anger and so on, do not come to an end unless they are emptied; they last throughout our life and also throughout future lives if not emptied. Apart from greed, fear and so on, there is another aspect of mental knowledge, namely intellectual capabilities such as measuring, judging, analysing and so on. The intellect will become weak if it is not used. A further aspect is that of the senses and sensitivity. All these aspects of the mechanism of the mind are interrelated. The mind should be sensitive and observant so as to feel and understand the sequential happenings of matter and mind.

The thinking brain has in fact very little control over the affairs of the mind. It can think with reference to the past and it can control some physical organs, but most psycho-physical operations such as heartbeat, digestion, glands, circulation, nerves and metabolism and so on occur independently, without the interference of thought, as does all this part of the mind, which is beyond the control of the thinking brain, sending intimations, feelings and sensations to the brain for necessary action. The thinking brain has the capacity to think on the basis of memory of the past and to act according to that; and the brain is also able simply to observe whatever is happening inwardly or outwardly. This ability of simply observing *is* attention, steady awareness, choiceless awareness, effortless effort, that is, meditation;

and thought, which is the product of the past, cannot understand its significance. Our thinking brain is continually recording every impression, thought and feeling and from all this creates images so as to bring order to all the stored memories. The thinking brain becomes enmeshed in this habit⁸ of recording and image-making because of tradition and because of the desire for physical or psychological security. The desire for physical security is part of our innate instinct for survival. However, it can be seen that in truth there is no absolute security in the domains of matter or mind—there is no real security anywhere in the world. Anything can happen — disease, danger, an accident, old age, physical death, natural calamity etc. This does not mean that we should not try to ensure physical security — that would be absurd. The physical organism is the product of nature and must be cared for properly. For example, it does not mean that there should be no birth control. If nature is in danger because of mass population, then birth control should be practised. In other words, we must work out how to live in the world with an open mind and without getting caught up in any of the conventional religions and ideologies, or in

⁸ “K: In our investigation, being in communication, we’ve come to the point together where we have discovered for ourselves that thought/word, thought/image inevitably will bring fear. And as long as this mechanical process, which has become a habit, goes on, fear will go on. Then we said, can habit end? This thinking this way, which is habit, can that end instantly? It can when we see what habit does, when we see the danger of habit. Right? Do you see the danger of habit?”

— J. Krishnamurti with Teachers, 2006. A Flame of Learning. Chennai, Krishnamurti Foundation India, pp176-177.

the pursuit of physical security driven by greed or the desire to dominate.

Thus the brain, which is constantly recording and memorising, always acts on the basis of the past in responding to “what is”, whether it is anger, hatred etc. or an abstract idea. The recording of information such as mathematics, technology, medicine, the way home, one’s language or civic administration is essential, there is no problem with that. Thus, where is the need to record flattery, insult, anger, hatred and so on? As these states are recorded they become etched into our psyche, and thought, which is movement between observer and observed, me and not me, mine and not mine, should be or should not be, etc., further reinforces these impressions. Each time we perceive something in the world outside or some past memory comes to mind, thought enters to create images and there is then a conflict of attachment, hatred, attraction or repulsion, and yet more mental impressions are created, leading to yet more suffering. And since thought is not capable of solving the crisis, it creates ideologies, conventional religions, dogmas, ideas of God and Satan, heaven and hell etc. Thought will invent some fantastic, theistic ideas such as one god or many gods, God as creator, sustainer, destroyer, God and Satan, God and his messengers, incarnations of God, God and separate souls, permanent souls, and will come up with philosophical or fanatical explanations or ideologies. However, thought *can* understand its limitation, that it is a movement in subjective time, with our daily life in work, art, science, communication etc. as its proper domain. As thought is fragmented and divisive by nature, when it creates

ideas, images and ideologies there is inevitably a conflict of ideas in the individual mind and in the collective global mind. The individual mind is the manifest mind and the collective global mind is the non-manifest mind (*niyati*). Thought has no access to the non-manifest mind, though it can have a vague impression of it. The individual mind influences itself and at the same time it also influences the non-manifest mind and vice versa because they are interrelated. Therefore it is possible to make a fundamental change or revolution in oneself, in collective minds and in the non-manifest mind. However, anything done by thought must remain incomplete because thought is divided energy.

Thought can come up with concepts such as me, mine, God; consciously or unconsciously it can create an immense variety of fantasies, projections and speculations. And with these creations people can declare themselves to be God's messenger, God's incarnation and so on. Or some conventionally religious tradition will bestow the so-called honour of incarnation on some great man or men posthumously in order to preserve traditional belief. We find this in every conventional religion, to a greater or lesser degree, but it is all within the sphere of discursive thought. Genuine religious enquiry needs faith, patience and doubt. Faith means the passion to enquire into religion. It does not mean belief — in genuine religion there is no place for belief. In our ordinary lives we frequently have to believe in something; we have to believe in many things, such as the postman or the police. Conventional religions propagate their beliefs by force or bribery, which is inherently wrong. Without doubt, faith and patience are blind. We should be

real sceptics. Doubt is intelligence and it clarifies our enquiry. Doubt is the desire to know the truth of the beliefs and ideas we hold or what others tell us. Conventional religions declare doubt to be an evil, but in fact it is a kind of mental healing medicine. Doubt is a feeling and thus enquiring into doubt in spiritual matters using discursive reason, though not bad as such, is bound to remain shallow even if the intellectual understanding is right. We must steadily observe every feeling — doubt, ambition, worry or whatever — so that emptying will take place, and from time to time insights will come to us. There is power in the singing of a bird, the prayer of a devotee, the speech of a leader etc. — the power may be crude, rough, subtle or refined but it is not beyond thought. Thought can gather great energy, so that if a person has an intense and sustained will, and a passion combined with care and affection for social reform, or even for religious reform, and is really passionate about carrying out his ideas, then such thought can gather tremendous energy and that person can change the social structure. However, this is still within the domain of thought. And whatever comes into being has its own lifespan in which it will flower, wither and die. Its lifespan may be short or long, even thousands of years, but even so there is impermanence, anything may happen — and thus we see the coming into being and dying and then the reviving of collective activities and bodies such as ceremonies, traditions, religions and ideologies. Change or reform is normal in our everyday world. Any social formation, such as politics, marriage and state laws and so on will need reform or change. However, in the name of religion any reform or

change to become something is transitory, as it is still the continuation of the past. Spiritual understanding implies meditation and it is a fundamentally different approach from that of discursive knowledge, memory and its cultivation.

Attention emerges from silence — it is silent, non-fragmented, non-divisive energy. Sometimes while meditating we may feel that in steadily observing our feelings, we cannot maintain our attention on our feelings, tensions or any sensations to the same degree all the time. In that case firmly and repeatedly fix the attention on the central point of the upper lip, or on the sound of the wind or the insects' shrilling, and then bring it back to observing feelings. This is not non-attention, rather it is directing and maintaining mental energy towards our feelings. You will find that as you observe the sensation at the central point of the upper lip you will at the same time be observing feelings and sensations. While meditating we cannot avoid sense perception, such as hearing, even when we are focusing so deeply that we are not listening. Why do we not use our mind's ability to meditate in order to overcome sorrow?

Why do we not keep thought in its proper place for use in our everyday lives? Thought, whether spoken or unspoken, is a mechanical process referring to the past, which goes on in some part of the brain in which organs such as the lips, tongue and face are actively involved. When the mind understands the limits of thought and is free of thought, then whatever feelings and sensations are perceived by the brain, it does not react but just observes; and even if there *are* reactions it simply observes them. Meditation is the

observation of feelings and reactions, psycho-physical jerks, tensions, tremors, pains, pleasure, greed, fear, envy, anger, desire, hatred and so on. However, there is no point in labelling these feelings and sensations. While we are meditating the mind will wander again and again — however, the very perception of non-meditating is to start meditating. The very nature of feelings is that they are divided, and thought further intensifies the division. So the mind wanders off into thoughts, and gets entangled with image-making almost automatically, simply because that is the way it works, on the basis of mental impressions. Therefore, deliberately using thought to bring about the ending of sorrow and the elimination of mental impressions is also non-attention.

Our face contains many tiny muscles, and our feelings are thus always being expressed in the face. Therefore as we calmly observe all our facial changes and expressions our sensitivity to our feelings will be enhanced, which is what is needed. And then we shall come to observe the coming and going of feelings and sensations in other parts of the body. The easy and natural flowering of meditation, and deep penetration into the stream of the mind, will come from this increased sensitivity towards our feelings. Some may declare that the observation of feelings as mirrored in facial changes, expressions or sensations is merely a technique, i.e. a *tantra*. The point however is not whether it is a technique or not — rather it is essential for the natural flowering of meditation. The word tantra is made up of *tan + tara*, tan meaning the body or the body-mind phenomenon and tara meaning to go beyond. Thus what we are saying about meditation is

essentially tantra. Meditation is emptying, that is, going beyond.

Observing a tree, waves or light on a sheet of water, colours in the sky, the night sky, natural happenings, our gestures, words and their qualities, our facial changes and associated sensations: to observe without the observer, i.e. without reference to the past, is meditation. The observer is the ego and it is encumbered with images such as I am this, I am that, not this, not that, should be, should not be, with calculations, judgments, opinions about rightness and wrongness, and all the creations of discursive thought and our fantasy. Remaining steadily aware of our feelings, without making any effort to correct, alter, suppress or escape them, will by itself uproot and eliminate the effects of mental impressions. Our accumulated knowledge and memory of such things as language, farming, science or whatever constitute a kind of centre, but this centre is not a problem. However, when the centre is ego, greed, fear, envy, resentment and so on, then there is conflict and sorrow — and this can become associated with our ordinary knowledge and inflate the ego.

Begin by seriously meditating for a period of two to three weeks and things will be clear. Allow feelings to arise without hindrance, and simply observe how they arise and pass away. Here we shall perceive the emptying of mental impressions. Sometimes this emptying may be accompanied by a release of energy with sensations such as breaking, cracking, tearing, exploding, being buffeted or musical strings being tuned. However, sometimes we may feel that no emptying is occurring while we are meditating;

nevertheless our work is not wasted, and the meditator comes to know this. Keep meditating. Sometimes the mind in meditation may see various kinds of lights — flashes, spots, various colours — or we may hear different melodious or musical sounds, or smell different aromas, or we may see pleasing or painful dreams, such as religious buildings, grand or ruined buildings, saints, spirits, heavenly beings, snakes or dead men. All these are the projections of our recorded impressions. Dreams are the bubbling up of the deeper complexities of the mind, the effects of day-to-day happenings and non-attention, while our state of health also affects our dreams. However, dreams are also feelings, sensations, thoughts. In the case of any miraculous experiences we must be observant and critical in order to assess their validity.

In the fire of meditation, day after day, and year after year, countless layers of conditioning are exposed from within the depths of the mind and are absorbed into emptiness, into intelligence. With the emptying of the mind comes a deepening of insight into impermanence, sorrow and compassion. The completely empty mind is absolutely still and silent, all the senses are awake but silent — this is an altogether different kind of consciousness, which is beyond speculation. In that absolute, still, silence there is grace, the revelation of supreme intelligence, supreme energy. And therefore it is wrong to say, I am this or, you are that: there is no I or you. The physical organism is present, but psychologically there is nothing.

Intellect, intelligence and supreme intelligence are grades of intelligence. Are intelligence and supreme intelligence the

same? Of course not. An emptying mind is aware of the silent operation of intelligence, but not of supreme intelligence. This is not a matter of belief, nor can anyone talk about supreme intelligence — it cannot be grasped or touched with words. For that we have to do the work of meditation for the ending of sorrow. In the field of intellect, that is in the domain of name and form, there is no security, but there is absolute security in intelligence. The energy of intellect is by nature divided, whereas intelligence is cosmic, it is absolute order. Everything is intelligence, i.e. energy, but there are grades of energy. Is intelligence the source of the intellect? Do these exist independently of one another, or do they have a common source? Is supreme intelligence the potential source of everything? Or what? People will come up with different answers to these questions, some intellectually persuasive, others imaginative or simply fantasy. However, intellectual satisfaction or the more emotional satisfaction of belief means that there has been no real enquiry and no revelation. In fact, we should be prepared to live indefinitely with such questions in our minds. But one thing is absolutely clear: the contents of consciousness, that is thoughts, feelings, sensations are the product of mental reactions to various animate and inanimate things, to ideas, ideologies — all this is part of the field of intellect. And in the flame of meditation the contents of consciousness become transformed into intelligence — the emptied mental impressions become intelligence. In this unconditioned process of emptying the contents of consciousness there is an irreversible regeneration. Finally, in the complete

absorption of the contents of consciousness comes the revelation of supreme intelligence.

There is also a place for dialogue. Dialogue can be intellectual or discursive, or it can take place in the sphere of intelligence. Free and logical enquiry clarifies thought and sharpens sensitivity, and such enquiry is of much help in dialogue between two or more people. In dialogue there may be a breakthrough or a partial breakthrough or we may go wrong, but we are free and open to see and know what went wrong. In the matter of religion, right dialogue begins in silence, moves in silence and ends in silence. This does not mean that there is no sequential movement. Nor does dialogue mean attachment to some beliefs, ideologies, utopias and so on. Dialogue is not some kind of slogan making. In right dialogue (*satsang*) there is the unfolding of intelligence. It is a movement in which the participants are at the same level, with the same intensity, at the same time (although somebody may be inattentive and lag behind, and in that case there is no dialogue with him even though he is physically present). Dialogue is necessary for communication. Reading a book, talking with a friend or an advanced meditator or an enlightened sage is a dialogue. The enlightened one is in harmony with silence, and when he sees, thinks, guides others, i.e. enters into dialogue with them, he is actually with others as if for the very first time. He can see psychic and other mental conditions clearly, as he is established in absolute emptiness. He speaks out of the silence of emptiness, that is, the silence of truth. Sayings coming from empty consciousness, such as those of Jiddu Krishnamurti, are like a mirror in which we see ourselves as

we are. The talks and sayings of such people are like a lamp shedding light on the path. However, it is of no use to praise and worship the light that is past: we must see and go on from there. We must be free and sincere, attentive towards reading and listening, so that we may perceive our mental states. Listening and perceiving go together. Dialogue can be very profitable for us in certain situations, but we should always remain in meditation.

Meditation is the only way to cleanse and bring order to the mind, and anything else we may try in order to do this is bound to go astray. Thus, once or twice day you should recollect what has been happening during the day, and then let it go. Recollect the various kinds of memory, that is, the thoughts, images, reactions, pleasures, pains, talks, which are all feelings, and then let them go. Recollect them one by one, remaining steadily aware of the feelings therein. This is of great help for the release of conditioning. And even if you do not practise recollection of past happenings, it does not matter — for in meditation old memories, buried mental impressions are bound to come to the surface and wither away. Remain in meditation during waking hours and meditation will enter into your sleep and dreams automatically.

Not only is the meditating mind emptying itself, but it is emptying the non-manifest mind as well. The absolutely empty mind can shatter everything. For harmony and peace in the world there should be everywhere and at all times empty or emptying minds. Therefore it is the responsibility of men and women and the global society to undertake the truly religious work of meditation and its right teaching.

When we do good for ourselves we are doing good for all. We must go on emptying ourselves, and in that we are emptying a part of universal sorrow. Actually, whatever affects the mind, rightly or wrongly, affects not just our own mind or other people's minds, but also the mind that is related to relationship. A man may be very precise and correct in a laboratory, in composing a literary work or working on a farm, in a factory etc., but why is he not so in relation to his wife or the world outside? Because he does not care to observe and understand the movement of his mind. You are like the world, the representative of the world, i.e. you are the world, and the world is in you. Life is movement in relationship, and relationship is a mirror in which we can observe ourselves and know what we are. However, even though each movement of life is interrelated, every individual is a separate unit because of this thought-emotional "me" and "mine", the observer and the observed, and this "me", this ego, is very very deep-rooted. Meditation is the emptying or absorbing of me. Psychologically, the observer and the observed are basically one and the same movement, namely, thought dividing and isolating itself as "me" from "what is". In other words, the observer, in applying the mental effort to do something in favour of or against "what is", is creating the observed as separate from the observer. However, both the observer and the observed are the movement of thought, thought gaining the momentum of image-making — "this should be, this should

not be” — in order to perpetuate itself, which is the process of becoming.⁹

However, all that is required is steady awareness of the content of thought, that is, feelings and sensations, which is observation, meditation. Without insight into meditation people can manipulate right or wrong ideas about religion like toys.

Let us put the matter of observer, observed and observation differently. Sensory contact, cognition and sensation and feeling are a natural process that cannot be stopped, and thus the arising of a sensation or feeling is “what is”, which is observed when desire-thought enters and reacts, either consciously or unconsciously, with attraction or repulsion, to “what is”, and in this process there is the recording of those sensations and feelings, that is, becoming. Here, desire-thought is the observer, which is bound to react on the basis of the past, or what is known. But when the action of desire-thought is stopped and instead there is steady awareness of “what is”, including the reactions that come up automatically, then there is no observer and observed but

⁹ cyanta acyanta hī upajai, cyantā saba juga kṣīṇa,
jogī cyantā bīsarai, tau hoī acyantahi līna. (244)

Thought arises from non-thought,
thought is the sorrow of ages.
The yogi gives up thought
and is absorbed in non-thought.

instead there is observation — that is, meditation and emptying.¹⁰

The whole of humankind is encased in the brain. The measureless past is locked up in mental impressions. We are one with the world and the world is in us; in other words, our consciousness is the result of ego and its reactions in its relationships throughout the infinite series of our past lives. Life is movement in relationship, but relationship is not limited to the particular incidents of our lives, for deep down all beings are related. It is all one movement — the stream of sorrow. Basically the consciousness of each and every being is the same — senses, sensitivity, fear, desire, greed, pity, affection, hatred and so on — and thus, in knowing fear in ourselves, we know not only our own fear but also fear itself. Meditation is constant work, it is not limited to special times for sitting in a meditative pose, and it can enter into

¹⁰ alakha sangyānai urdha oṣṭha madhya binda dharanta,
saha mukha maṇḍala sū bhāva pavanā dekhanta,
draṣṭā drsyā bhedai bhātī darasāya sādhai,
sūrajanātha kahai sūnī kālānta niravāṇa jīvai. (314)

Observing with the alakh sense
the sensation at the centre of the upper lip,
and observing the flow of feelings in the face,
the observer and the observed are revealed,
brother, observation is achieved.

Surajnath says, emptiness is the ending of time,
it is to live nirvana.

— From Gorakh Sabadi, The Sayings of Gorakh Nath, edited and translated by Yogi Surajnath and Bhagavan Nath, 2023.

our normal day-to-day living hours. We may very often not perceive what is happening in our mind in our interactions with other people, but later on, during silent moments we will recollect and perceive very subtle mental events and reactions. This depends upon sensitivity and steadiness. All the feelings and thoughts that come up in our mind become part of our consciousness if not emptied, but “I/me” identifies some thoughts and feelings as me, not me, mine, not mine etc. This does not mean that we should not put our position in our personal relations as far as day-to-day living is concerned, nor does this mean that our righteousness or unrighteousness do not matter. But isn’t all our recording affecting our consciousness? Are we separate from what we say as not me, not mine? Are we separate from the rest of humanity, from the world outside? Deep down there is one united movement, one stream of sorrow in flux, and without meditation it is bound to perpetuate itself. So when we do good we are not only doing good for ourselves but for everyone.

There is no point in yearning for ultimate absorption — we cannot speculate about that. What we *can* do is emptying, and emptying is emptiness. Just go on emptying. That is all. And then you will become aware of progress and regeneration. Attention is the focusing of higher potential energy, which uproots and dissolves mental impressions: non-attention is the diffusing of that energy resulting in the creation of further mental impressions. So it is up to us whether we keep on meditating or not.

Meditation is emptying and unburdening, and we understand that it is a work beyond the capacities of thought. Thought is

observer, i.e. “I/me”ness, and its reactions to “what is”, which then become observed movement. Meditation is the ending of mental impressions, of “I”ness and “I” that have become ingrained in us through the recording of mental impressions and thought chains. However, despite emptying we still experience, as a kind of fact, that the sense of “I”ness, the “I”, the “me”, is present, is observing, and the sense that I am observing remains continuous. And then the question arises of who this “I”ness is. Is it some permanent entity? Or what? Thought has a fear of the unknown, and consequently a fear of losing this “I”ness, because thought feels that if it is finished, if this “I”ness is finished, then what? The thought, the “I”, wants to be secure, but its every effort means more thought and desire, in other words subjective time, sorrow. Meditation is the emptying of every feeling, even if it is the feeling of losing “I”ness or whatever. Well then, what is this sense of “I”ness? It is quite simple. We all have such a great crowd of thoughts, so that when we meditate, streams of thought arise automatically from within our consciousness in a continuous succession, apart from feelings and sensations. So, although meditation is the emptying of mental impressions and also of “I”ness, the sense of “I”ness continues simply because of the streams of thoughts that are constantly arising from within without a break. Thus, psychologically the sense of “I”ness as an independent being, separate from others, continues. However, through meditation and emptying we shall experience a fundamental and permanent change in the quality of this “I”ness. With sustained meditation work there will come gaps in the image-making thoughts, which will

become wider and wider, until those thoughts come to an end. Then comes the pure “I”ness, which one feels not only in oneself, but as if “I” am present through every being or everything, or everything lives through me. And with further meditation and emptying, that pure “I”ness will also go, so that there is simply “is”ness. With absolute emptying there is nothing, for that intelligence cannot be described otherwise.

When someone whose mind has been completely emptied, with all mental impressions being completely dissolved, dies physically, what happens? His or her body matter merges into universal matter, and the subtle mind matter merges into the universal mind. And there is nothing — that intelligence cannot be described, words have no power, no capability to catch that energy. That person is no longer a separate entity. Universal matter and universal mind are themselves unconditioned energy, which is integrating and disintegrating, arising and passing, every moment arising from nothing and passing into nothing.

V – RIGHTEOUS LIVING AND MEDITATION

Living righteously involves seeing what is righteous and what is not righteous. Pride, greed and envy are ingrained feelings through which we experience attraction or repulsion. And egoism, pride, greed, envy, hatred, anger, fear, attachment and so on, which are all related, are all symptoms, expressions of “me”, which tries to expand itself by gaining more and more, by imitating, comparing, trying to become like someone else, becoming attached to some ideal and so on. Greed, envy for material things such as a shirt, a skirt, a house, a car, becoming rich, a girlfriend or a boyfriend, or for thought-projected things such as heaven, hell, fairies, traditions, beliefs of conventional religions — both are the same. All negative things, such as fear, anger and so on, are related to greed and envy, attraction and repulsion. All these things lead to disease, famine, war and so on. Perceiving ego, greed, hatred, etc. for what they are is righteousness. And freedom, fraternity and a sense of responsibility are righteousness. A free mind is not contaminated by psychologically constricting and enslaving things — it is open and reasonable. It sees all humans, indeed all beings, as brothers and sisters. With such freedom and fraternity comes the awakening of the sense of responsibility. The sense of responsibility embraces many things: towards oneself, others, physical fitness, privacy, human dignity/ rights, education, work, usefulness, family, village, humanity, animals, plants, religious-spiritual understanding, and such questions as, what is life? why are

we alive? what is the essence of life? what is supreme intelligence? Our responsibility to understand and be of help to others for the awakening of understanding is implied by the sense of responsibility.

We naturally take care to protect our feet from thorns and stones, but what about saving the life of a creature creeping in front of us? This does not mean that we should or should not be aware of our surroundings. Do you feel sympathy for others, do you help anyone who is in need of help? Is it right to rely on somebody else to guide us all the time, particularly in spiritual matters? If you see an animal sitting quietly in the shade, do you feel its solitude and privacy? Do you trouble it, or are you kind and thoughtful towards it? What do you feel? Do you feel the majesty, the beauty of a mountain, the sea, an old tree, a jewel, a machine that works nicely, a gentle saintly man, or the ugliness of a dirty smell, a crooked and deceitful man, violence? Is it not incorrect to depend upon guidance all the time? You may be a serious meditator or not, but if you are open to see and know, you will easily and naturally see your mistakes through relationships like these. You may be the kind of person who is interested in intellectual matters and calculation, and in these activities you may feel some pleasure, but this temporary feeling is not going to solve the problem of sorrow. The love that is intelligence and flows out of meditation works from a deeper level than calculation.

Imitation, authority, passion for one thing or another, such as learning a language, learning a technique, following fashions in clothing or reading books are a normal part of our

lives, but why do we blindly pursue traditions, beliefs, dogmas, conventional religions, ideals? Thought will often try to give scientific explanations for beliefs, rituals, ideals etc., but science should not be associated with conventional religions as in so doing there is the loss of scientific objectivity, scientific principles and logical expression. It is also harmful to spiritual enquiry. Scientific facts must be stated as they actually are. Life requires that we be free and critical thinkers, and above all steady observers of the happenings of the mind.

Meditation implies the mind of a scientist and the flight of an eagle, which leaves no mark behind.¹¹ As we meditate both conscious as well as unconscious accumulations of consciousness will manifest themselves. Actually in meditation conscious consciousness or unconscious consciousness are not separate — there is only consciousness. Meditation is arduous work because of our wrong habits of mind, which seek security in thought, becoming attached to me and mine, material possessions, beliefs, ideals and so on. Nevertheless, anybody can do the silent work of meditation. Naturally, we have to be very serious about it — we should see that our house is on fire. This very “me”, which is the accumulation of memory and

¹¹ alakha bināñī doi dīpaka racilai, tīna bhavana ika joti,
tāsa bicārata tribhavana sūjhai, cuṇilyau māñika motī. (5)

The alakh vigyani shines light on duality;
throughout the three worlds, one light.
Meditating on it, the three worlds appear —
go gather rubies and pearls.

mental impressions, is a burning house, and that house is being held together and enlarged by thought and desire. Meditation does not mean to imitate or contemplate a saintly face, or to repeat a word or mantra, or to induce a thought-projected trance or state of peace, or to concentrate with the aim of reaching some divine plane or heaven, *all of which depend on knowledge and memory*. When concentration is directed towards achieving something, this implies choice and requires that anything else that comes into the mind should be avoided or suppressed, and this comes within the process of desire-thought, or attraction or repulsion. We may achieve concentration while meditating, or our meditating awareness can be focused or concentrated, but we should not avoid or repress our sensations. Thus, while we are steadily observing feelings — facial changes, expressions — we shall become aware of sensations, sounds around us, smells, touch, which are also sensations, or sometimes we may not be aware of these sounds etc. In either case, in meditation we do not try to avoid or suppress them.¹²

Meditation is to go beyond thought. Steady awareness of “what is” is meditation. And “what is” is always changing, from moment to moment. Thought cannot remain with “what

¹² “Any child is capable of concentration — give him a new toy and he is concentrated. Every businessman is concentrated when he wants to make money. Concentration, which we think we should have in order to meditate, is really narrowness, a process of limitation, exclusion.”

— J. Krishnamurti, Talks by Krishnamurti in Europe 1956, p104, in Weeraperuma, op. cit., p37

is”, because thought is past. Thought can chase after memory, but that is all part of thought. Look! The insight into this simple truth is clear when you observe the ever-vibrating sensation on the upper lip or the shrilling sounds of insects around you. The “me” thought and its qualities, such as greed, anger, fear or uneasiness, are actually the same, but there is a conflict between what should be and what should not be, when the “me” thought thinks of itself as separate from greed, fear or uneasiness and hopes to have something else, and having the qualities of attraction or repulsion tries to do something. However, when we perceive that in reality the me thought, i.e. the observer, and its qualities such as fear, desire or pride, i.e. the observed, are the same, that the observer is the observed, and that what is happening is simply observation, then there is no anxiety about becoming something other than “what is”. Observation is meditation. There can be no mental projection of peace, fearlessness, non-violence and so on apart from the observation of uneasiness, fear, violence and so on. To repeat, meditation does not mean avoiding or suppressing, it engenders no psychological conflicts, and hence wholeness of mind ensues. It is undivided, and thus unlimited. Wholeness of mind is the intelligence that dissolves or empties mental impressions, which is the ending of suffering and sorrow, and the flowering of love and compassion. Thought can be sympathetic and kind but it cannot know what love and compassion are. Life is movement in relationship and it demands not only tolerance, which is something created by thought, but a much greater thing, which is affection and

love, that is compassion, which blossoms out of meditation. Life demands meditation.

We shall come to realise through our meditation that the whole field of intellect, that is, actuality and reality, mind and matter, name and form, is in flux, it is impermanent, and any attachment to this, any involvement in it, is bound to end in disillusion. Reality and actuality are a part of our normal lives, and when our intelligence is awake we shall not be pessimistic or careless about them. Rather, we become very careful, adept and enthusiastic in our day-to-day living, such as our work on a farm, in a factory or office, in politics, arts, science, religious teaching or education. Intelligence will develop its own skills and style. Such a person is unattached, having a free, compassionate and responsible mind. The meditative mind will see the absurdity of thought-projected conventionally religious ideas such as revenge, celibacy and so on. We may be celibate or not — everything, including sex, is a matter of understanding. Thus, sexual desire is an innate passion, which is at the origin of childbirth and the cycle of life. In meditation we discover the recording and eliminating of mental impressions, including those to do with sex, and this is understanding: understanding what is (meant by) becoming, which is the stream of sorrow, what is going beyond the stream of sorrow, what is wholeness of living. What is needed is this understanding, and we can be celibate or not. However, to fall prey to sex or to deny and suppress sex are both incorrect. In some traditions celibacy has been given excessive importance in the name of religion, which too is incorrect.

Meditation gives absolute psychological security, whereas in the field of intellect there is no security — anything can happen. We can plan what we are going to do, where we are going the next day or the next year, but we cannot plan or predict what feelings will arise in our minds in the next moment or the next day. In the material world very many forces are affecting each other and working on each other differently. It is true that we need and pursue physical security, which is correct. However, thought being divided and divisive thinks about psychological security differently, and creates different ideas, ideologies, conventional religions. The meditative mind knows that the material world is impermanent, illusive and not secure, but independently and thoughtfully tries to secure all that is necessary for normal living — food, shelter, clothing, health, education, work, knowledge and skills — and even if something untoward happens, it remains inwardly secure as the meditating mind becomes immune to the effects of various external forces.

In the practice of meditation some people may come upon some extraordinary psychic powers or siddhis such as enhanced sensitivity, clairvoyance, thought reading, thought transference, healing of diseases, bilocation, immunity to certain things, astral journeys or knowledge of past or future events. Psychic powers are matters of worldly life, and as such are neither good nor bad, but getting caught up in them is bound to end in disillusion. Psychic powers may come and go of their own will, some people may gain control over them, while some may not come across any psychic powers even with absolute emptying.

Righteousness gives energy to the mind, silent passion gives energy to the mind, meditation is energy free of all conditioning. Let us put it around the other way: righteousness and silent passion are the gaining of unconditioned mental energy, or religious *pāramitā* as the Buddha put it, which promotes spiritual enquiry, and meditation is the release of conditioned or locked up mental energy. However, when righteousness is associated with desire, with the passion to perpetuate ego, it becomes conditioned energy. Image-making is the dissipation of psychic energy — image-making about what we should or should not be, what those to whom we are attached should or should not be, what those who are opposed to us should or should not be. Or image-making about what we were, are and want to be, image-making about what those to whom we are attached were, are and will be, and image-making about those we are opposed to were, are and will be. Such thinking, such image-making, is simply the dissipation of psychic energy in which there is no end to mental conditioning and sorrow, but rather the increase and perpetuation of sorrow. However, in our daily life of farming, trading, studying, composing etc., we can see the facts objectively as they are, recollect them as they were and also speculate about the future course of events — and if there is some mistake, a wise person is open to accept readily his or her mistakes, remaining alert in order to avoid further mistakes.

Sometimes those who do not know the way of meditation — the nature of feelings and sensations, desires and thoughts — but practise *prāṇāyāma*, or concentrate on some image, a spot of light or a colour, or repeat some word, phrase or

mantra, or think, analyse, rationalise either with spiritual passion or with passion for some worldly intention or miraculous powers — such people may find different feelings, sensations, thought-pictures occurring in the body or mind and be puzzled about them or react with attraction to the pleasant feelings and sensations and with repulsion to those that are painful, and thereby stay immersed in the stream of sorrow. When someone seriously and steadily contemplates a subject, with righteousness and silent passion, then steady awareness of feelings and sensations may sometimes occur, and there will be some emptying, which is like cutting the leaves and branches of the tree of mental impressions but not directly uprooting them. Some mental impressions may be uprooted, but by nature contemplation is not capable of emptying the mind completely. Thus it is possible that mistakes may occur in expressing the things of the mind and the way of religion because there has been no perception through meditation of the sequence of mental events. We can see this in many saints throughout the world in various times. Clear insight will give us the understanding that intellectual debate about theism or atheism is the practice of conventional religions and traditions, and that righteousness, silent passion, meditation are the way of intelligence. The thought-oriented mind tries to refute other theories, ideas, other conventional religions or even religion as such, or it tries to compare, adjust or compromise. Even so, spirituality is not a matter of opposing, favouring or compromising. It is a matter of sharing, wherever there is openness to enquire and to listen. Spiritual living is the activity of attentiveness, meditation.

Meditation is to remain steadily, closely, diligently aware of feelings and the sensation at the upper lip, steadily aware of facial changes and all the associated feelings, memories and emotions.

We find different social structures, laws, customs and practices, and in all of these there is or should be a place for fair and open thinking. However, every thought-created structure, every rule will need reform or change in the course of time. There is no need for pride in one's language, tradition etc.: right understanding is what is needed. Thus, we should be prepared to fit in linguistically, socially and culturally with other people wherever we have to live. Alexander the Great advised his garrisons in various parts of Europe, Africa and Asia to assimilate with the local people. The point here is not his military talent, but his insight into human behaviour.

We understand that by nature human marriage is a life relationship, it covers more than one generation, and you should not think of another marriage unless it is so needed. And your "so", whether in relation to marriage or anything else, which you can change, is a mirror that shows your orientation.

Right livelihood and good manners are other important aspects of daily life. Education in science and arts is essential. However, a livelihood involved with addictive things such as tobacco, alcohol and drugs, or theft, cheating, untoward profit-making, dominating by force or bribery, exploiting, butchering, gambling etc. cannot be considered to be right livelihoods. But more than such assertions, what

we need to understand is that any livelihood pursued from motives of greed, envy, pride, selfishness etc. — that is, not out of a sense of responsibility — is bound to be wrong. Ego, greed, envy can be about food, taste, sex, money, all kinds of worldly things, ideas, beliefs, communities, conventional religions. Insight into righteousness is the awakening of intelligence that knows what right livelihood is; it sees also the need for change in changing situations.

Ugly gestures, untoward coughing, hawking, blowing the nose, spitting and so on before others, coming into contact with animate or inanimate things unthinkingly, reacting violently to pleasure or pain, insensitivity to surroundings, sounds, shapes, colours, different situations etc. — all this indicates a lack of good manners. We should understand what is wrong, what creates the ugly feeling or sensation; and with understanding comes the knowledge of good manners. If we blindly follow what others tell us to do, or dogmatically tell others what to do, the enquiring, developing intelligence is suppressed. This intelligence is not the same as intellectual chattering and disputation. Meditation brings the awakening and flowering of intelligence.

Parents, friends and teachers, should help young children and students to understand their ability to choose the subject or subjects they can best handle. Students must be educated in such a way that their education does not become a matter of selfishly motivated comparison or competition, which does not mean that they should not progress well in their studies. Above all, a student must learn to be a light unto

himself or herself. Competition and comparison arise out of ego, greed, the hope to become something else psychologically other than what we actually are. The best is to work out of love, to study out of love and not out of ego, greed and envy. There are many different subjects we can study — farming, trade, physical education, arts, martial arts, science, astrology, occultism, mathematics, literature and so on — and different people have different interests in and abilities for different subjects. This is normal. Education should be impartially open to everybody. When seeking employment, one should depend solely on the merits of depth of understanding, knowledge of this or that subject, physical fitness and skills, and not on the expectation of gaining something on the basis of gender, caste, class, conventional religion and so on, as is so often the case in worldly life. Remember that Socrates was not poisoned by the so-called upper class or lower class, nor by a majority or minority community, but by attachment, greed, in other words, by ignorance. However, dependence on education in this or that subject in order to bring sorrow and the recording of mental impressions to an end and to regenerate oneself psychologically and spiritually is bound to end in disillusion, because all this belongs to the impermanent field of intellect. The treasure of life remains concealed to those who have no insight into meditation. In other words, to know life is to know yourself through and through. Meditation affects our life, even a life that enters and grows in a meditating mother's womb. Right religious education is therefore most important, and even though wisdom and intelligence can never be forced onto someone, surely out of love we can be

of help to others in their religious understanding. Learning and teaching the way of spirituality, the way of meditation, is the best way to live.

Meditation depends upon a foundation of righteous living and silent passion for the supreme. Every living being has an intrinsic passion to live and to know, but human beings also have an intrinsic passion to know the supreme. This is what silent passion is. Silent passion simply means that we do not know or hold any idea, image or concept about the supreme. We must keep this silent passion pure and uncontaminated by thought. Silent passion presents an unanswerable question to discursive thought. In silent passion the mind's quest goes beyond measurement. Thought is measurement and we know its limitations. Beyond measurement there is nothing to do other than to observe, to remain steadily aware of "what is" from moment to moment. Silent passion is not a desire to achieve or to reject something, with attraction or repulsion. It is possible to say that silent passion is a desire, but it is a totally different kind of desire. Silent desire is not a thing; it is silence of desire; it is not directed to the supreme through ideas, beliefs, conventional religions and so on.

Silent passion can be described as nothing, no thing. There is no other way to describe it. It is the energy behind unconditional evolution. The word "evolution" implies a sense of time, so we can speak of evolution for a plant becoming a tree or a child growing up and then getting old. This is physical time. Evolution is involved in learning medicine and becoming a doctor, learning some technique and then practising it. Some people may need less time for

this, others more. This is neuro-physical time. Physical time and chronological time are synonymous. Furthermore, we may see ourselves as restless, violent etc., and believe that by trying to cultivate peace, non-violence etc. over time we shall become peaceful or non-violent; or we may ascribe an ideal quality to the supreme and believe that by contemplating it in this way we shall attain it — but all this is thought projection, or what we have called “subjective time”, in which there is conflict and deterioration.

The mind is like an empty drum that has to respond according to the beat. If the beat is within the limits of thought then the mind enquires and responds within the limits of thought, within the limits of the known. But if the beat, the question, is not within the limits of thought, the enquiry and response of the mind come from beyond the limits of thought, from the undivided, unlimited mind, that is intelligence.¹³ If a person who is a follower of some conventional religion or an ideology puts a question to his mind from within those limits, the mind is bound to enquire and respond within those limits. Many people incarcerate themselves in these prisons because of ego, greed or fear, and this can be very dangerous. However, when we feel a

¹³ adekhi dekhībā dekhi bicāribā, adisīti rākhībā cīyā,
pātāla kī gangā brahmaṇḍa caṛhāibā, tahā bimala bimala jala pīyā. (2)

Behold the unseen, contemplate the seen,
keep your mind with the unknown.
Raise the Ganges below to the egg of Brahma,
for there the pure drink pure water.

need for right religious understanding and want to be of help to others for their right religious education, then the mind has to enquire and respond from beyond the barriers of traditions, beliefs, ideologies and conventional religions. The response of the mind that is tuned through meditation is insight, which comes like a flash. It may happen at any time. It cannot be expected or predicted. Spiritual work is not a matter of tradition; it is always new and fresh, and the spiritual mind initiates it for others wherever there is freedom and the passion to know. Love, intelligence, is the energy that works. Intellectual man, divided within himself by discursive thought, cannot have a relationship with a loving and intelligent person unless he is free and sincere; but a loving and intelligent man has a relationship with all. This is very simple — the relationship is love that does not expect to be loved in return.

Nature has designed us with a face that is capable of withstanding changes in weather conditions. All our sense organs, including touch, are located there. It is plain then that we should generally keep our face uncovered during our normal daily activities, especially in our interactions with other people, so we can sense what is happening around us and also share the universal language of feelings naturally expressed on our faces. Just as the eyes are the mirror of the soul, so the face is the mirror of our feelings, of what we are.¹⁴

Being sensitive to other people, and aware of our own self, is the straight and royal path; in other words, when we are thoughtful and honest in what we say and do, this is of

benefit for our physical health and mental strength. Even so, life is incomplete without the inward flowering that comes through meditation and emptying.

¹⁴ hasibā khēlibā dharibā dhyāna, ahanisi kathibā brahma giyāna,
hasai khelai na karai mana bhanga, te nihacala sadā nātha kai sanga. (8)

Laugh, play, and keep meditating,
day and night declare the divine wisdom.
Laughing and playing, don't divert your mind,
motionless, always in the company of Nath.

VI – DISPELLING THE CENTRE OF THE EGO

Along with seriously meditating while awake, if we also meditate when we go to bed, our meditation will automatically enter into our sleep. However, this does not mean that we should then observe or witness our dreams objectively. Sometimes it may seem that we are watching the pictures and thoughts of our dreams objectively, and sometimes we may not be aware that our dream is a dream. What is important, however, is that we remain steadily aware of our feelings in the dreams, and thereby achieve deep penetrating and emptying. This is quite simple. What is happening is that our brain is trying to bring order and harmony into all the impressions it has received from the whole complex of thoughts and feelings, and our dreams are part of this “automatic thought processing”. The thinking brain, i.e. thought, is a part of the mind; and despite all its efforts it cannot bring order to the psyche. Having our thoughts in order is essential for day-to-day work, technical skills etc., but any effort by thought to bring order to the psyche, any effort to bring order to greed, anger, fear, restlessness and so on, is itself disorder. Thought cannot know the dimension beyond thought, it does not know meditation, so it goes on chattering and recording. Insight into meditation is fundamentally different; it is a mutation in the psyche; it is that creative insight that everyone needs in order to give birth to the real understanding of life; and it can use and keep thought in its proper place. The insight gained from meditation means knowing that meditation is capable

of bringing order into psychic disorder by emptying mental impressions, and there is no other way. In other words, this insight is pure perception, which dispels the very centre of the ego, the darkness that self creates, and radically changes the brain cells, the consciousness; and from that perception there is action, which is then¹⁵ sustained by rationality, that is, rationality sees the limit of itself, thought sees the limit of thought itself, and is always open to give way to intelligence to be focused through attention and to operate on its own to empty the consciousness.

We see that although meditation is simple, it is arduous work, and that there is no other way. Furthermore, it is the order of nature that the mental impressions, i.e. feelings and sensations, of the lower levels are the first to come up and be gradually emptied, for if mental impressions from deeper levels come to the surface our physical organism may fail to bear that and may collapse almost immediately. Our consciousness is like a dark hidden cave that may contain many things, but sometimes we receive hints from further depths, maybe the deepest levels, like some bubbles from deep dark waters, in some haphazard movements in our fingers or in some other parts of our body. These moments

¹⁵ “K: So insight is pure perception, and from that perception there is action, which is then sustained by rationality. Is that it?

“DB: Yes.”

— J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm, 1992. The Ending of Time. Chennai, Krishnamurti Foundation India, p138.

Sūrajnath states that, like Gorakh Sabadi, this text is one of the greatest spiritual classics of all times.

can occur at any time, whether we are meditating or not; what we should do is to keep observing “what is” from moment to moment, and when we do that, these things will stop happening.

In the practice of certain kinds of contemplation, the mind may feel some relief, some psychic power or feeling of confidence, or may undergo some pleasant or painful experience. However, thought is divided, divisive and self-perpetuating, whereas the attentive meditating mind penetrates and works instantly on thought, brain matter, mental impressions. It also affects people and other beings who come into contact with it. It is a law of nature that every thing affects every other thing, but the effects of meditation are not divided and divisive. Dogmatism, fundamentalism, all those do's and don'ts in the name of God and contemplation, are the way of the conventional religions. Righteousness, silent passion for the sake of God and meditation, is the way of true religion.

Deep down, every individual is made of the same body matter and mind matter — flesh, bones, chemicals, and affection, compassion, greed, envy, anger, fear, lethargy, skills, a talent of this or that kind, thoughts, feelings, sensations. Yet apparently every individual being is different, in physical appearance and psychological Orientation — such is our individual uniqueness. Individual uniqueness is a kind of psycho-physical chemistry. Each individual is unique because of chemical changes — but this is not something permanent. Individual uniqueness is characteristic of daily life. Our lives are the living of

variations. Thought is chemistry, and when it goes wrong in egoism, greed, envy and so on, it turns into a problem of conflict. Meditation is alchemy, the instant action of attention — it is effortless effort.

Deep sleep and other kinds of sleep are given by nature for the rejuvenation of our bodies and minds. In deep sleep there is no awareness of what is happening in or around us. Other kinds of sleep may be roughly classified as: dreaming and inattentive sleep, dreaming and attentive sleep, or attentive sleep with no dreams. In dream sleep the surface layers of consciousness are in abeyance and the deeper, so-called unconscious layers of consciousness rise to the surface as dreams. As we meditate seriously and attentively during waking hours, meditation will enter into our sleep and the deep-rooted mental impressions will be erased. Sometimes you may feel that you are awake when in fact you are asleep, as you will come to know when you do wake up, which may happen frequently throughout the night. There is nothing to worry about in this, and you will wake up fresh in the morning. Our body needs rest in bed, but true meditation is rest for the mind while we are awake or asleep.¹⁶

Many people are eager to know about religion, but for most of them this is simply a matter of intellectual gratification.

¹⁶ gagana maṇḍala māī sūni dvāra, bijalī cāmakai ghora andhāra,
tā mahi nyandrā āvai jāi, pañca tata māī rahai samāi. (176)

There is a door to emptiness in the inner heavens,
lightning flashes in the terrible darkness,
sleep comes and goes through that door,
and pervades the five elements.

Why are we not serious about meditating? It is up to us. The erasing, eliminating or uprooting of mental impressions is the erasing of me, of the meditator, and this is meditation. When the mind has become completely empty of mental impressions, there is an altogether different meditation. When there is attention, there is only meditation and no meditator (though we use the word meditator for the sake of communication). Meditation is not a matter of labelling somebody as a meditator or a non-meditator. When somebody is attending to feelings or sensations, he or she is a meditator, but when that same person is not attending to feelings or sensations, he or she is not a meditator. In meditation, awareness of both feelings and sensations in various parts of the body cannot be kept completely apart, nor is this to be expected, for feelings and sensations are naturally interrelated, but we can focus our attention either on feelings or on sensations; and for easy and natural meditation we simply need to focus our attention on feelings in our face, along with that unique ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip. In our meditation we shall thus see that the arising and withering away of feelings are like waves, which are not limited to our face but extend throughout our body, and are emptied layer after layer. The withering away and breaking or exploding etc. are interconnected — it is all emptying.

In our meditation our perception of mental events may vary: sometimes both sensations and feelings will be clearly perceived, sometimes both will be unclear, sometimes feelings but not sensations may be clearly perceived, and sometimes it may be the other way around. Sometimes

sensations may have a clear centre or centres and be surrounded by sensations and reactions to those sensations; sometimes there will simply be waves in one part of the body or another, or throughout the body; or there may be the experience of tensions, pulls, stroking, pressure, pain etc. Sometimes we may be aware of powerful sensations in different parts of the face, such as the forehead, nose, lips, cheeks, lower parts of the cheeks or neck etc., but whenever this happens we should gently observe them, as we are naturally much more sensitive to our faces. The lips and surrounding area of the face are naturally extremely expressive of our feelings, which may be observed there. All this is quite simple. The waves of feelings that spread over various parts of our body may be clear or not clear, but those that come to our face are always clear to us. All that is needed is simply to observe "what is", and through this we shall experience the emptying and unburdening of our mind. Whatever we may feel about ourselves inwardly, let it be — there is *no need* to rationalise or agonise about what we should or should not be. Thus if we feel uneasiness or fear etc., we should not try to cultivate peace, fearlessness etc. Labelling some feeling as fear might be necessary externally, but in meditation it is not necessary to label a feeling as fear etc. Naturally we shall find that because of our wrong habits thought will enter our minds in ten different ways to disrupt the continuity of our meditation, but the very awareness of disruption is steady awareness, that is, meditation. And when we are serious and persevering, meditation follows again and again, and the wrong habits of the mind are overcome. It can sometimes happen that you will see intelligence dislodge

your thought and work on emptying mental impressions, in other words, sometimes attention just happens, meditation takes over, and mental impressions are emptied by themselves, even if you are focusing your mind on reading, working in an office, on a farm etc. This happens because of meditation work you have done earlier (maybe yesterday or this morning while you were waking up) and because of silent passion.

While our physical body is covered with skin, psychically the whole mind-body complex is open; that is, deep-seated thoughts, feelings, expressions rise to the surface of the mind. What is required is sharp sensitivity and steady awareness of feelings and sensations — and, indeed, in the very observation of feelings and sensations our sensitivity will become all the keener. Food, shelter, clothing — we all need these things, it is right that we endeavour to secure them, it is right that we feel secure, physically secure, even though there is no absolute certainty about that. But why do we search for our inner or mental security through thought instead of through meditation? Our thoughts, ideas or desires for inner security are themselves the cause of inner degeneration. There is no inner security apart from meditation. Meditation is intelligence and intelligence itself is absolutely secure. Meditation is going beyond the law of karma, of reward and punishment. In meditation we come to know the common language of feelings and sensations, which we share with all beings. But it is what we do now that matters the most. For sorrow to come to an end, for truth to unfold, we must meditate seriously, diligently, patiently and persistently.

Conventional religions may offer some practice in the name of equanimity and steadiness. They do not like it if we are critical and doubt them, and they propagate thought-projected prayers, flattery, idolatry etc., and as a result the mind becomes dull and insensitive — in fact, the victims of conventional religions crave some kind of emotional pleasure, some illusions, some peace. It is natural and healthy to be sensitive to different things, thoughts, memories, ugliness, beauty, various situations, sounds, colours, gestures, space, various beings and so on. As we are steadily aware of feelings and sensations, the ever deeper mental impressions become erased and our learning becomes profounder, so that the mind does not regress from the level it has attained. All recording of mental impressions occurs because of ignorance, and ignorance remains until the last trace of the recorded mental impressions has been erased — until the image-making, the “me”ness, the “is”ness, is absorbed into nothing, into intelligence. And beyond that is *tat*, the potential source of everything, which has been misused and corrupted by conventional religions.

This task of emptying, the eliminating of mental impressions, can be speeded up or delayed indefinitely. However, when we understand our need to empty our mental impressions and put an end to sorrow, can we delay this task indefinitely? Are we not our own guide in this respect? The completely empty mind knows everything, knows life, but this does not mean that the person in question knows every language, every science etc. If such a person wants to learn a language or a musical instrument or a science, naturally it will take some time. The mind is extremely capable and can

be trained in this or that subject or field. Different people have different abilities, though basically matter and mind are the same. The brain is an instrument, a mechanism, and it is related to the senses including thought. The attention capacity, the ability of the human brain is an altogether different energy. We can say that the thinking brain does have its own kind of awareness, but there is a kind of awareness that is beyond the thinking brain, and that is attention, and then there is supreme awareness. Discursive thought has no access to attention awareness, and it is bound to remain cut off from supreme awareness. However, attention awareness knows and can use thought awareness. There is nothing to say about supreme awareness, for the revelation of supreme awareness happens when the mind is completely empty. The way of intelligence is not blind belief or an intellectual game: meditation is the way of intelligence. What we say about the natural way of meditation — is it not complete, clear, simple and practical? Spiritual awareness is not afraid of death, it has no fear of losing ground. It is up to human beings to keep the way of spirituality awake. Conventional religions are afraid of death, they are afraid of competition, failure, of losing ground to other conventional religions or secular ideologies. Blasphemy or flattering prayers, idolatry in the name of God — these are thought projections. Conventional religions propagate intellectual ideas in the name of religion, they propagate dogmas, ideologies and do's and don'ts in the name of God, through greed, fear or the will to dominate, or they offer various kinds of contemplation in the name of ways to the supreme. The way of spirituality is one of righteousness, silent passion

and meditation; meditation implies righteousness and silent passion.

VII – FREEDOM AND MEDITATION

Psychological freedom and psychological captivity are not opposites of each other, they do not go together, nor are they rooted in each other. Freedom, intelligence and love go together: they are the same. Love has a timeless, open relationship towards captivity, towards everything, but captivity, that is psychological division, has no relationship with love. So-called religious teachers and their books, politicians, traditions etc., want and try to influence, guide, shape and control our minds, which is not freedom. In thought we do have freedom in such matters as acquiring knowledge, skills or money, and we can attain freedom from such things as tradition, oppression and ambition. Furthermore, it is possible to achieve some freedom and peace through following some conventionally religious beliefs and practices, despite their being essentially thought constructs. But freedom as capacity, freedom from something and freedom as a goal to be achieved is conditioned, it is not freedom *per se*. Meditation is freedom. We are not on the path of intelligence without freedom. Freedom is not gradual. Even when we think or feel we are free, deep-rooted mental impressions may still turn us towards certain ideals or mind-sets. And this cannot be called right understanding. Right understanding comes in a flash, radically shattering our psyche. However whenever we realise we are getting caught up in intellectual games or conventional religions, there is always a way to come out—and that way is to meditate, to remain steadily and unwaveringly aware of the feelings and sensations involved,

while the followers of the various conventional religions carry blindly on, satisfying themselves intellectually, and sometimes quarrelling and fighting like dogs.

Being friendly towards those who are contented, compassionate towards those who are in trouble, happy towards those who are helpful to others, and equanimous towards those who give trouble to others is good, it is thoughtful, ethical and virtuous. It rejuvenates and refreshes the mind. Thoughtfulness and virtue do have their right place in our daily lives, but they are out of place in meditation, as meditation is absolutely free from thought. This is quite simple. Outwardly we may be helpful to others but inwardly there can be complex feelings and thoughts, so we should remain steadily aware of the feelings that arise. We may not be a social worker, a political leader, a talented genius etc., but if we are serious meditators, we are best serving humanity.

In every human being there is silent passion for supreme intelligence — no human being is atheistic. Labelling someone as theist or atheist on the basis of beliefs and dogmas in the name of God is the nonsense of ideologies, and conventional religions; and this is wrong. This kind of thing happens when we get caught up in thought-projected ideas in the name of a way of life or a religion. To be on the way of true religion we must be simple, honest and open, we must be free, discerning and dedicated — we must be a meditator. Meditation itself is the master guide. Simplicity does not mean wearing a special kind of clothing, or living deliberately in poverty. Simplicity means being free from

fantasies about poverty or wealth — we live normally, righteously, in accordance with our daily requirements.

Simplicity is in fact primarily a matter of understanding. Simplicity does not mean being dull. Being simple is being open to what is.¹⁷

We all know that human beings can be very varied — some are more energetic, some less so, some more clever and talented, some less so. Some can be clever and talented in one field, and along with this they may be righteous or corrupt, and some can be less clever and talented and similarly may be righteous or corrupt. However, it is true that we can change, we do not have to stay fixed as we are. There are no grades of righteousness, and unrighteousness can be relatively more or less. Further, someone can be righteous with the desire for a reward, which is immaturity, and another can be righteous and have no desire for a reward, which is maturity. Such maturity is not something to be developed over time — insight into meditation is itself maturity. The flowering of our consciousness through this maturity and meditation work is a steady process. We observe every feeling, whether it is desire or whatever, and

¹⁷ “There cannot be simplicity as long as one belongs to any particular religion, to any particular class or society, to any dogma, either of the left or of the right. To be simple inwardly, to be clear, to be vulnerable is to be like a flame without smoke; and therefore you cannot be simple without love.”

— J. Krishnamurti, Krishnamurti’s Talks 1949-1950 (Verbatim Report)
... Ceylon , p30, in Weeraperuma, op. cit., p181

we empty it. What is needed is being serious and alert. Meditation is spiritual work and it cannot be restricted to any age group, social class, or to those who have had an education.

Those seriously meditating may sometimes perceive a gap between the various mental impressions as they arise into consciousness, lasting a few seconds or even some minutes, in which they may feel an unknown depth, openness, wideness, bliss. Sometimes they may feel this openness, depth, bliss even when thoughts, feelings or sensations are arising during their meditation. These deep experiences may go on for some time, and then the meditator will return to his or her normal state. This may happen in solitude or in sleep or sometimes when he or she is with somebody. Day-to-day things can be planned or predicted, but the happenings of the mind cannot be predicted — what feeling, what psychic experience is going to arise in the mind the next moment or the next day cannot be predicted. However, we should not hope for or contemplate this openness or bliss because this is bound to be self-hypnosis. Contemplation for the sake of peace is enclosing oneself within ideas, and in this we are not open to the truth. Meditation is the peace that dissolves that which is not peace ... how? Because meditation empties mental impressions.

Some boys are quarrelling over toys, and because their quarrel gets louder, some relatives come to see what is the matter. There is a dispute over the cause of the conflict. A man related to one of the boys is very impatient and uses rough words — he is very attached to the boy and cannot

view the matter impartially. A second man is not quite so impatient, sometimes he speaks freely and thoughtfully and sometimes impatiently and rather roughly. A third man is quite open and reasonable, he speaks impartially, what he says is very effective. There is a fourth man, a meditator. He is steadily aware of all that happens in and around him — he is observing feelings and sensations. Naturally, he too is open and reasonable, he may speak passionately or gently, and what he says is also effective, but more than that it is his very presence that is the most effective.

Meditators cannot become unconscious, go mad, cannot go into a coma because of some ailment such as a fit or epilepsy, for the meditating brain cannot do any of these things, except if it is physically damaged. Meditation itself is capable of curing or uprooting many diseases, but this does not mean that a meditator will never be affected by some disease. Disease means physical trouble, illness — the possibility of being diseased is much reduced for a meditator, but in case of illness do not hesitate to seek an appropriate health care. The mind is a very complex yet simple phenomenon. Thus, you may not feel the soft ever-vibrating sensation at the centre of the upper lip when you are under the influence of some drug. The brain is the centre of awareness, but if part of the brain, the thinking brain, dominates, then it is possible that at any time it may succumb to greed, envy, fear, anger and so on. Even a serious meditator may sometimes fall victim to pride, greed, envy, lust and so on. However, freedom and dedication themselves will restore us to sanity, and therefore we should be steadily aware of our feelings and sensations whenever we fall prey to such states. You may

commit mistakes in understanding someone else's thoughts and feelings, but "what you are" is always open to you, and what you need to do is to observe and empty yourself. Needless to say, your meditation, i.e. intelligence, is always free of mistakes.

In the case of disease or organic disorder we have to think and act physically. Similarly, with mental or psychic disorder we can try to treat it with thought and physical action and hope to bring some peace and order to the mind or psyche. However, when dealing with the psyche, any attempt to bring about peace and order through thought or physical action is basically misguided. It is thought itself that is the cause of psychic disorder, the cause of image-making and recording, and it is meditation that is needed to rectify and heal psychic disorder.

Any movement of the mind — whether it is analysing, discriminating, judging, calculating, directing, pondering, changing of ideas, projecting etc., which is all measurement — away from the fact of "what is" is thought. And when thought sees its limitations and takes its right place in daily use but remains quiet the rest of the time, though murmuring thoughts may continue, in that awareness there is the awakening of intelligence, that is, the silent movement of cosmic intelligence becomes focused therein. Silent awareness of feelings and sensations is meditation. In most human beings there are mental impressions relating to animal, human and divine worlds, but there is no need for us to dwell on or get caught up in the desire to know which mental impression arises from what kind of being or which

world. Such desire is futile. What we need to do is to meditate and empty mental impressions layer after layer (as we described in Chapter I), from the lowest — the animal and lower-spirit — through the human, higher spiritual and divine layers to the highest; by nature the lowest level will be the first to be emptied, then the next, and the next, so that then we shall not regress from the level we attain. And so serious meditators feel a gradual but irrevocable change in their consciousness day after day, year after year, as the emptied mental impressions are gone once and for all, never to arise again, for they are transformed into intelligence.

We may distinguish between reality, actuality, truth and absolute truth: thought is reality, material substance is actuality, attention is truth and supreme intelligence is absolute truth. That which is held in the mind as an image, design or idea is reality; that which physically exists, whether based upon an image or apart from an image, is actuality. The idea of a chair is reality and the chair itself is actuality. A tree is actuality. In nature there are no ideas but facts, changing facts, creation in flux. Nature is direct moment-to-moment creation. Nature, cosmos, is intelligence. Thought is a part of nature but it is a lower kind of intelligence. The part of the brain that is capable of thinking has come to be made more important than it should be in most human beings. Thought cannot know the immensity of attention. The thought or idea of a chair, music, a computer is meaningful in our normal daily life, but any idea of God will always fail. Thought, an idea, may be right or wrong, crude or refined, but in itself it exists, it is a reality. Ordinarily our awareness is determined by sensory

perceptions, that is, it is dependent on the sense organs, including the thinking brain; our awareness is related to sensations, feelings and thoughts, which are material and changing. We must realise that we do not know what is beyond the sense perceptions, that we do not know supreme awareness. Attention breaks and dissolves mental impressions and in this there is the unconditioned evolution of awareness. The meditating mind realises this as a matter of fact; and when there is complete emptying, the complete dissolution of mental impressions, then comes the revelation of supreme awareness, which “uses” an empty mind, an empty brain, although the brain cannot predict or demand it. It is beyond the sense organs, beyond sensations, feelings and thoughts.

Reality is the lowest kind of intelligence; actuality is a higher kind of intelligence; truth, that is meditation, is a still higher kind of intelligence; and absolute truth is supreme intelligence. Reality and actuality belong to the field of intellect. This field is controlled by the universal, all-pervading laws of nature, which are themselves actuality, religion at the lower level. However, religion also means the gathering of psychic energy, wholeness of mind, meditation — and with meditation comes the flowering of that mysterious sense, that mysterious feeling, which can be called love, compassion.

VIII – MEDITATION DOES NOT HAPPEN UNLESS ONE DOES IT, THOUGH MEDITATION IS DOING NOTHING

When there is a fundamental change in the mind, when there is right understanding of the mind, and of religion, people who have this understanding, even if they are few in number, are a danger to conventional religions and blind traditions. They come together, communicate, and work for the sake of spiritual understanding, and keep it awake. Such people are the true, loving servants of humankind, and of nature. Deep down, there are no divisions amongst them. They may have different opinions about worldly matters such as the forming or reforming of state laws, property distribution rules, formalities in marriage ceremonies and so on, but such things can be settled with open minds.

Meditation is the simplest activity — actually it is acting nothing, doing nothing. But meditation does not take place unless one does it. It is effortless effort. The ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of upper lip is a natural help in meditation, not just for beginners but always and for all of us because then we are naturally and easily observing steadily. Thought cannot achieve the steadiness that is needed and that needs to be strengthened again and again. The observation of this sensation and the observation of feelings go together harmoniously. In doing this we shall also be *automatically* aware of sensations in other parts of our body and we will not need to direct our attention towards them. Thus our steadiness strengthens, our sensitivity to our

feelings sharpens, and meditation flowers naturally, easily and sweetly. We may experience sensations in any part of the body, but there are related feelings coming out in facial changes and expressions. Sometimes the sensations may be clear but the related feelings are faint, or the feelings are clear but the sensations faint, or both may be clear. Sometimes we may feel we are flooded with many layers of feelings. Whatever the case, that which is “is”. Remain steadily aware primarily of your feelings. In being aware of feelings we are automatically aware of sensations as well. The phrase, “that which is”, implies the psychic fact, the changing stream of feelings and sensations. As we have said, the steady awareness of feelings or sensations is meditation. Some may say that the steady awareness of our breathing is also meditation because it is a fact. However, that is a kind of contemplation that can indeed bestow deeper and deeper psychic calmness and peace. Although breathing is related to the body and mind, in being aware of breathing our meditation will remain very shallow and separate from the actual stream of the mind. While meditating we are sometimes aware of our breathing and sometimes not, which is perfectly all right, but remaining steadily aware of breathing and attaching importance to it becomes a kind of contemplation, a samādhi work.

The meditating mind becomes very sensitive to its material and psychic surroundings — the different vibrations of material things such as colour, weight, sound, sound quality, shape, size, chemical quality and smell, and the different feelings, thoughts, tendencies, emotions, which basically are all sensations. When different vibrations come into contact

with each other, there may be harmony or disharmony, they may remain neutral or produce some different vibrations. We need to know the harmony and disharmony of various vibrations for our ordinary living, but inwardly we need to know what we are, we need to meditate. In our daily lives we can make mistakes, judge wrongly, but the silent energy of meditation is absolutely free from the possibility of a mistake. True religion does not provide some kind of panacea — some ritual, verse, word, mantra and so on — these things are the purview of conventional religions. Meditation is the ultimate alchemy, which by ending mental impressions transforms sorrow into intelligence. In our meditation we shall see the emptying of mental impressions as we steadily observe *either* feelings *or* sensations. These are interrelated, but for easy and natural meditation we need to observe feelings, for our face is the screen on which we can observe feelings. As feelings are the essence of bodily sensations they naturally come to the surface in our facial expressions. And this mysteriously ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, being unique and independent of bodily sensations and feelings, is of natural help in meditating, in steadily and alertly observing feelings and sensations.

Samādhi literally means the equanimous holding onto or concentrating upon something. It is an activity of contemplation, which is intended to keep up sustained concentration in order to strengthen mental steadiness. This can be because of spiritual passion or directed to some achievement of knowledge and memory. Various religious or conventionally religious teachers teach the practice of

samādhi such as concentrating on your breath near the opening of nostrils, or concentrating on some idea or image.

Samādhi practice can also be done independently of meditation. This practice may have a narrow restricted scope, being conditioned by some traditions, ideologies, conventional religions — you may choose words, a mantra, an idea, or an image from some traditional context on which to concentrate, and the ideological force may work through it consciously or unconsciously, or you may choose an abstract concept, such as a sky-like void, which can be taken as a quality of God or simply as itself, on which to concentrate. You can also practise samādhi without being attached to any ideology or conventional religion, by taking an image of some universal appeal to concentrate on such as a flower, star or mountain peak. Furthermore, contemplation in its advanced stages tends not to work with mantras, words or images, and instead dwells upon a sky-like void, through which one experiences a kind of tranquillity, as if engulfing everything or as if pervading everywhere in and around — some ideologists call this *ātmā* or soul, but it is in fact very fine vibrations. These practices can bring great happiness and peace. However, despite its breadth and subtlety, which can be widened and refined infinitely, the practice of samādhi is still of the field of the intellect, which can induce subtler and subtler vibrations capable of bestowing higher and higher divine powers and rebirths, but the possibility of downfall may remain potent in the consciousness because of the persistence of mental impressions. In samādhi practice there is less emptying, and mental impressions become frozen in our consciousness and can well up at any time

through our interactions with nature, animals, people. Throughout the ages most people have been cultivating samādhi only as a religious practice, and this has been partly or mostly responsible for wrong turns in human society. The strengthened, sharpened concentration of samādhi can be directed differently to awaken different dormant mental powers. Some people working on samādhi can develop and master the power of *śaktipāt*, i.e. the transmission of energy into another person, consciously or unconsciously. In such a case the energy can last for a little while or come again and again, or it may be evoked through suggestion, in the name of God, some deity, a saintly person or simply in the name of energy *per se* with no belief involved, but in all this there is no ending of sorrow. Samādhi work can eliminate some mental impressions, rather like picking leaves off a tree, or sometimes some mental impressions may be uprooted, through our steady awareness of feelings and sensations. It is possible to practise samādhi through detachment from the other sensory perceptions, feelings and sensations or by not being detached from them. When samādhi is practised with righteousness, without being attached to conventional religions, with silent passion for supreme intelligence, God, by not reacting with attraction to or repulsion from the feelings and sensations that arise in the mind, then there is the possibility of more emptying of mental impressions. However, in this practice mental impressions are not erased directly and quickly, and neither is the consciousness completely emptied. Furthermore, any happenings in the consciousness may be interpreted incorrectly, as we so frequently see in conventional religions — even emptiness

and the process of emptying of mental impressions can be wrongly interpreted. And, unfortunately, most of the saints arising in the shadow of this or that conventional religion are more or less neurotic. Look, it is quite apparent, and it is we shallow saint lovers who corrupt things even further.

Contemplating emptiness in the name of God is one thing, and the emptiness found in attention to “what is” are fundamentally different; this means not being attached to ideas and ideologies in the name of religion. Merely a thought-free state resulting from the effect of chanting or reciting a mantra is not emptiness; even the calm state of the mind achieved in samādhi is not emptiness. These are the effect of work by the partial mind itself. Do you have insight into emptiness?¹⁸ It is up to you to meditate and see the truth as it “is”, to live in the light which is always present. Or you can live in the shadow, in the domain of thought and becoming. The idea of God, Allah, Satan, Brahma and so on, even materialist or atheist ideas, created by thought, are the shadow, and when there is no thought there is no shadow. It is not a matter of avoiding or getting involved in the shadow — you are that, it is there, and all around you. See it. And the simplicity of it all is that the very act of seeing is going beyond, is being in the light, is emptiness.

¹⁸ sūni ja māī sūni ja bāpa, sūni nirañjana āpai āpa,
sūni kai paracai bhayā sathīra, nihacala jogī gahara gaṁbhīra. (231)

Emptiness is the mother, emptiness the father,

emptiness is flawless by itself.

Calm comes with insight into emptiness,

motionless yogi: profound, dignified.

Thoughts about negative emotions such as anger, fear or hatred, or hostile forces such as bad-tempered people, spirits or satanic forces, may arise in the mind, and if there is attraction or repulsion towards them the mind will be affected by these forces. Basically they are sensations. We should not think about evil forces of any kind, and if we do have to think or talk about them at all, we should do so with a steady mind. This does not mean that reactions of attraction or repulsion will not arise in the mind — simply note them, and remain steadily aware of your feelings. Even with respect to thoughts of affection, care, love, sympathy, compassion etc., remain aware of the feelings they evoke.

The mind of a meditator will perceive good or bad thoughts or dreams, and will be aware of the feelings that result. Furthermore, you may hear various kinds of sounds, some very melodious, some cacophonous, while awake or asleep. You may see various lights, bright spots or colours with the eyes open or closed. However, such sounds or lights will not cause any difficulties in normal hearing and seeing. If there are any such difficulties, have a medical check-up, but otherwise there is no need to worry. These sounds or visions may occur suddenly, without any warning, or they may continue for some time and then stop altogether. Whatever the case, you should attach no importance to these sounds or lights. Just remain steadily aware of them, and of any associated feelings and sensations.

Some meditators may experience what in yoga is called *nād*. Literally meaning “sound”, it refers to an unbound (*anahad*) or unstruck (*anāhat*) sound that can be heard in meditation.

Initially it may sound like the shrilling or buzzing of an insect, but the difference is that while the sounds of nature can be blocked out, you cannot lower or stop the anahad nād while meditating, or even otherwise. This nād will cause you no problems in your day-to-day life. As you simply listen to the anahad nād it can change, which reflects what is happening in your consciousness. Just observe it. Do not expect some particular sound, or some miracle, just observe your feelings, otherwise you may hypnotise or confuse yourself. Initially, plugging your ears while alone can help in hearing the nād.¹⁹ *Prānāyāma (kumbhaka)* may help in quickly awakening the deeper aspects of nād. While listening, be steadily aware of “what is”, and thus you can more easily achieve a calm and thought-free state of mind, above the ego, which is called a supra-conscious (*unmana*) mind.

Some meditators may experience *nūr*, meaning “light” or “colour”. Just as anahad nād refers to the ears, *nūr* refers to the eyes, i.e. the mental eyes. *Nūr* is practised with the eyes

¹⁹ avadhū kāyā hamārī nāli bolīye, dārū bolīye pavanā,
agani palītā anahada garajai, byanda golā uṛi gaganā. (95)

Avadhu, call our body a gun,
call our breath gunpowder.
Then attention is the fuse that ignites anahad,
and bindu the ball that is shot
into the inner firmament.

nb. This verse is not by Gorakhnath, he is dated in the 9th-10th century, as guns and gunpowder had not yet been invented. We can call it a “late verse”.

closed, covered with a black cloth to start with, while alone. Initially nūr may be like twilight or night, so just observe that. With practice other colours may appear. Again, simply observe, and also observe any desires or feelings that arise, just as they may in the practice of nād.

Listening to the nād may be called *surati*, and observing nūr *nirati*. Surati literally means “good in being with, easy in being with, well intent upon, in love with”. Nirati means “absorption, being engrossed in”. Nād is active, masculine, while nūr is passive, feminine; they balance one another, so you can practise both together once you have experienced them. Awareness of the sensation in the centre of the upper lip and of nād or nūr can go together. Well, mental impressions are emptied more directly when you are observing the sensation at the lip and your feelings and other sensations, along with observation of nād or nūr, or without that. Be a light unto yourself.

IX – THE ENDING OF SORROW

Some say that the way of religion is like climbing a mountain peak from different sides by many paths. Some say that the way of religion is like a road but that there are many vehicles, many ways of travelling along it. Some say one thing, some another — the intellect can project many things. Some are dogmatic, fanatical, some philosophical, and some are fantasies.

The way of true religion is quite simple. It is to know what is sorrow, how the mind becomes filled with mental impressions — how it becomes conditioned and therefore burdened, what is the ending of sorrow, how the mind empties those mental impressions. The forming of mental impressions can be stopped and the already existing mental impressions can be eliminated. Mental impressions are created because of ignorance of the law and wrong mental habits resulting in attachment and the forming of mental impressions. Sorrow is causation. The law of the sequence of sorrow is as follows: ignorance (*avidyā*) > mental impression (*samskāra*) > consciousness (*vijñāna*) > mind and matter (*nāmarūpa*) > six senses (*shadāyatana*) > contact (*sparśa*) > sensation-feeling (*vedanā-bhāvanā*) > desire (*trshnā*) > attachment (*upādāna*) > becoming (*bhava*) > birth (*jāti*) > decay and death (*jarā* and *mṛtyu*). This twelve-fold process can be put briefly as follows: ignorance > ego > attraction or repulsion > image-making. This causal sequence of sorrow can be broken at the point of sensation-feeling and desire or attraction-repulsion. That is, instead of reacting with attraction or repulsion to pleasurable or painful

feelings and sensations, we should remain steadily aware of those feelings and sensations. Continuous, steady, alert awareness of feelings and sensations is meditation. Meditation is thus the ending of sorrow. This is how it is: there is sorrow, sorrow has a cause, sorrow can be ended, and there is the way to end sorrow: sorrow (*dukha*), arising (*samudaya*), ceasing (*nirodha*), the path (*magga*).²⁰

The complete, clear, simple and practical way, the natural way, to end sorrow is righteousness, silent passion and meditation. Righteousness means seeing, but not giving in to, ego, greed, envy, and acting with freedom, fraternity and a sense of responsibility. We should have the right desire, the right passion to live, to know religion, to overcome sorrow and to help others to overcome sorrow.

Awareness can work through three kinds of intelligence. First, that which has been listened to and acquired from others, books etc., such as knowledge relating to science, art or civil administration, knowledge which can be checked or verified through enquiry — and so we can believe in a postman, a doctor etc. Second, free and critical thinking — such a person is not swayed by emotion or sentiment, but rather is thoughtful and wise. However, this intelligence also

²⁰ Readers will recognise these as the Buddha's four noble truths, and will have noted that this text contains items from the Buddha, Gorakhnath, Jiddu Krishnamurti and many other seers. Likewise, the sequence of the causation of sorrow has been taken from Buddhist literature.

can go wrong and a person can become an advocate of some ideology, belief or conventional religion. Third, steady awareness of “what is”, steady awareness of feelings or sensations. This is meditation. Meditation can use believing and thinking but not vice versa.

We can speak of space and how it is filled — it is naturally filled by things and beings, and also by things whose origin lies in thought — such as a chair, house or machine. The designing of these is primarily a mental matter, something which we need in our daily lives, but thought can be a hindrance to our spiritual regeneration, for there is another kind of thought occupying our minds, namely, greed, envy, the desire to dominate and so on, and also attachment to conventional religions, beliefs, ideas etc. Furthermore, as we have seen, the effort of using thought to bring an end to sorrow must fail, because thought creates sorrow, it does not end it. Space is required for functioning and thought can widen or reduce this space: when the followers of a religion accept religious freedom, including the freedom to change one's religion, we have the widening or creating of more space for that thought; and when followers do not tolerate or accept religious freedom, whether in the name of God or not, we have the narrowing or enclosing of space by thought. We can also see this in our day-to-day relationships. However, space created by thought is bound to remain conditioned by the inherent limitations of thought. Meditation is fundamentally a different activity, it is beyond the scope of thought and the space therein is not limited. Basically there is no difference between physical space and psychological space, although they can be talked about differently. The

space between sounds, trees, mountains, stars etc. is physical space, and the space that a thought creates for itself in our mind, the space between two thoughts, is psychological. It is possible through concentrating on something, be it from greed, attachment or in the name of religion, to come to a space between two thoughts. However, the space between two thoughts that a meditator discovers within through sustained meditation is basically different, because there is no possibility of degeneration from the level one has attained. Space, silence, emptiness, intelligence, *bodhi*, *prajñā*, *sushumnā* are the same. Meditation is space, it is free of physical time and psychological time.

Space, vacuum, that is emptiness, that occurs in the environment and creates cyclones, itself seems to be doing nothing, simply because it is nothing, yet it is the force that is capable of affecting or the force through which there are pulls, moves in global and environmental matter of every kind. Can it be a dead thing because it is nothing? Of course not. This space and matter relation, from within and without, seems to be a law regarding cosmic phenomena. When we live consciously in that space, that emptiness, despite thoughts murmuring and chattering away there in our mind, that is, when we live with attention to “what is” itself, then we know what it is capable of. It is capable of creating pulls, moves in whole of our consciousness, which is not only our own but related to the global consciousness. And intelligence, which is beyond the scope of our brain, our consciousness, becomes awakened there in that emptiness and silently works, that is it dissolves and empties our consciousness; and so we have the awakening of intelligence

and deepening of insight. Intelligence in itself does not get affected, it remains uncontaminated, virgin, absolute. So, when you are alert and silently observing “what is”, then life, intelligence is awake too, emptying and unfolding through you.

The cosmos is intelligence. There is order in the evolution of innumerable beings. Every being comes into existence from universal matter and universal mind as a very minute being and starts to experience and evolve. Beings are constantly coming into existence. Both the creator and the created are creation. The cosmos is creation. “Cosmos is”. The coming into being, evolving, and perfection of a being is intelligence. Every being is free to evolve. In the evolution of a being intelligence is evolving. Nature, that is, intelligence, sees its completion in the conscious perfection of a being. In the order of evolution, beings below the human level are in a state of “unconscious perfection”. Creatures, animals, do not have passions beyond sensory perceptions, they have no passion for the unknown, no passion for supreme intelligence. However, the order of evolution undergoes a fundamental change with human and supra-human beings. In human and supra-human beings there is passion for the unknown, passion for supreme intelligence, and so they are in the state of “conscious imperfection”. With conscious imperfection comes the capability of steady awareness, and thus in the process of learning through meditation we may attain conscious perfection. In that absorption lies truth and nothing else. The attainment of that truth is revealed in pure action without reaction.

Free, rational, logical, analytical enquiry sharpens the mind, but logic and analysis are an aspect of thought, which, as we have seen, is a lower kind of intelligence. Logical analysis is of little value in spiritual enquiry. So, just let a problem sit in the mind, do not throw it out, and do not try to get involved with it intellectually. Just meditate, remain continuously aware of your feelings, which are always rising and falling, always changing. In the silence of meditation the mind becomes emptied and in that silence the problem can be solved, either partially or wholly. Some problems may remain without solution for a longer time, but in the absolute emptying of the mind no problem is left behind. There is no ignorance, no confusion. The nature of matter and the mind is absolutely clear. Here we are moving beyond matter and the mind, to where there is nothing but intelligence.

Plants, creatures, animals, birds, humans, planets etc. come into being and depart. Every living being is born, lives and dies. Deities, planets, stars etc. come into being, live and come to an end. We know what is the birth and death of a being — it is a movement of consciousness, which is a bundle of mental impressions. So, while it is clear that everything comes into being and ends, is there a beginning and ending of the cosmos? Does it come into being or end? Of course not. The cosmos is creation *per se*. It is beyond time. Conventional religions have produced different ideas about the company of heaven, the resurrection of the body, the day of judgment etc., but these ideas have no reality apart from thought. The cosmos is intelligence and the coming into being and the evolution of a being is intelligence. Every being, that is every creature — whether animal or human —

is responsible for the mental impressions it creates. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of every human and supra-human being to end or uproot mental impressions and be absorbed into supreme intelligence.

Although the body-mind complex of a being is a bundle of mental impressions, that a human being has the inherent power to eliminate, this does not mean that universal matter and universal mind are conditioned. Universal mind and matter are unconditioned — this is nature, creation, intelligence. The universe is not something created by some internal or external agency but is itself creation, coming into being and dissolving, from moment to moment. It arises from nothing and passes into nothing. This is its nature, its law.

The elimination of mental impressions is the emptying of the mind, and with the emptying of the mind comes the unfolding of truth. This does not mean that you are going to be a farmer, an engineer, the master of various languages or an artist automatically. Secular learning is the kind that needs the use of the memory. Spiritual learning is another kind of learning. "With the emptying of the mind comes the unfolding of truth" means the deepening and widening of the mind, the mind's perceiving and understanding its nature, how it works, how mental impressions are created, how they are eliminated, what is sorrow, what is the cause of sorrow, the ending of sorrow etc. In meditation the mind observes itself and knows itself. This is the means of overcoming sorrow and becoming absorbed into intelligence — the emptying of mental impressions is absorption into

intelligence.²¹ With thoughtfulness someone can be a gentleman, a good speaker, writer etc., even a good thinker or speaker in the field of religion, but no one can become truly spiritual or saintly without emptying the mind. We cannot predict when we shall be absolutely empty: we can see and know only where we are, what we are, and that we are emptying.

The right master (*guru*) indicates “what is”, and the right disciple sees and knows “what is”, and thus there is no authority and no dependency in spiritual learning.²² Life is movement in relationship and it offers immense scope for the sharing of intelligence, but real answers to spiritual questions come from within. What we are saying in this book is practical, but we are not offering any kind of regimentation in the name of religion and meditation. What we say is wide open to experimentation, with a free, reasonable mind, with patience and discernment. It is no good hoping for some kind of borrowed energy in spiritual matters, such as prayers, mantras or *saktipāt*. Such things may work a little in this or that direction, but they are bound to remain very superficial and end in disillusion. Wherever there is dependency and any kind of authority in the matter of spiritual practice there is danger. What is important is to understand the mind and to unburden it by dissolving mental impressions.

²¹ In the flame of meditation the process of absorption of mental impressions into intelligence is like heating and withering, and this may frequently be experienced as a cracking, breaking, exploding, felt mostly in the head but sometimes in the neck or torso.

Mere intellectual understanding of the mind does not work — though it is not bad in itself, it remains very superficial.

Truth does not depend on the number of people following it or going to conventional religions. Spiritual living requires both the mind of a scientist and meditation. Science is a part of creation that we explore. Doubt and freedom to enquire are needed, both in science and, even more, in religion. To deny doubt and freedom to enquire in religion, even in the name of God, is evil, a thought-created absurdity, a disease in the global consciousness.

God is not one nor one becoming many. One is measure, which can be divided or multiplied infinitely. God is not even zero, inasmuch as zero is the negation of measure, which is still a kind of measure. Samādhi — an ultra thought —, which can be deepened and widened, is still zero measure, still the movement of a partial mind. Thus, in meditation, in attention to “what is”, intelligence silently focuses on and empties the measure, that is, it empties mental impressions. Glimpses of supreme intelligence may sometimes occur in meditation, but it is absolutely revealed in complete emptying.²³

²² adhika tatta te gurū boliyē, hīṇā tata te celā,
mana māñnai tau sangi ramau, nahī̄ tau ramau akelā. (161)

More wisdom: call him the guru; less wisdom: the disciple.
If the mind agrees, roam together, otherwise go off alone.

²³ jini jānyā tini kharā pahaicānyā, vā atala syū lo lāī,
gorakha kahai amē kānā suṇatā, so ānkhyā dekhyā rai bhāī. (273)

He who knows truly recognizes the unmoved through the fire of meditation.

Gorakh says, dear brother, we listened with our ears, we saw with our eyes.

X – A NEW SEED OF LEARNING

We may speak of two kinds of learning. One is learning and memorising, that is, storing in the mind, and subsequently acting skilfully or inappropriately, according to that knowledge. The other kind of learning is to observe without the accompaniment of past stored knowledge, as if for the first time, afresh. In steady, fresh observation there is no cultivation of memory. It is not a process of observing and storing up memories on which the next observation is based, and therefore not observing anything afresh. Steady awareness or observation is the function of an unoccupied mind in which a new seed of learning can germinate. Meditation is the second kind of learning, in which there is emptying and unfolding.²⁴ This is intelligence, and intelligence allows the mind to retain as much memory as is required. This does not mean that we cannot recollect past happenings, we may or may not, but there is a difference because the mental impressions have been erased.

The minds of small children are delicate and sensitive. They are naturally enthusiastic, they flower playfully. They need careful and affectionate treatment and above all the right education for their physical and mental development. The

²⁴ darasaṇa māī darasaṇa bāpa, darasaṇa māhī āpai āpa,
yā darasaṇa kā koī jānai bheva, so āpai karatā āpai deva. (272)

Observation is the mother, observation the father –
through observation it all happens.

Whoever knows the mystery of this observation,
he is the doer, he the god.

body flowers, withers, ages and dies from wear and tear, but the meditative mind is forever young — meditation is the ending of time. Every conventional religion and dogmatic tradition poisons and corrupts the tender minds of children, so parents and teachers must be open and discerning, as learning and teaching go together. It is a great virtue to be able to confess one's mistakes to a child, student or an older person — this is an aspect of righteousness. Children need to be properly educated about mental freedom, sensitivity, alertness, silent passion for supreme intelligence, righteousness and meditation. They should be educated about thought, the limits of thought, and about the thought-oriented traditions that pass for religion. They should have a good education in such things as language, science, work skills and the arts — they should be educated to be simply human beings because this is the basic need for the spiritual flowering of life. Religious education should be in the mother tongue, the language shared with others.

Changing from one conventional religion to another is changing from one prison to another. Every conventional religion is more or less dirty — from which it follows that initiation into any conventional religion is inherently flawed. Flattering prayers, worship, rituals, ceremonies in the name of religion are hypocrisy. All ideas fall within the limits of thought, in which we escape from virtue and “what is”. The texts of the various conventional religions do contain some valuable sayings, which are all fine and good. However, what is required is to discern these good things and become aware of the nonsense they also contain, for it is the nonsense of these conventionally religious books that is the main thing

dividing man from man. Ideologies, dogmas, prayers, rituals, worship, traditions, ideas of a messiah, a prophet, a saviour, an avatār or incarnation, Hiranyagarbha, varnāshram, a Maitreya, the last day, the day of judgment are all thought projections and have no reality apart from thought. The cosmos has no beginning and no end. “It is.”²⁵

²⁵ dābī na māribā khālī na rākhībā, jāñibā agani kā bhevā,
būḍhī hī thai gurabānī hoigī, sati sati bhāṣanta śrī gorakha devā. (173)

Don't try to suppress the mind, don't keep it vacant.

Learn the mystery of fire.

It is very ancient and emerges as the guru's teaching.

True, it is true, says Gorakh Dev.

Physically, there is a beginning, a sustaining and an end of every thing, be they plants or planets, humans or other creatures. However, psychologically, for conscious beings, there is no specific beginning of the consciousness of any being. Our consciousness, which deep down is a collective stream in time, in life (day-to-day living) and death (physical death) is an ebb and flow among vary many beings, not individually separated, but continually in flux without any beginning, and it could go on and on infinitely if there is no ending to it in the fire of observation, meditation. This is very important to understand, so that ideas and ideologies in the name of the first and last, Adam and Eve, ātmā and Paramātmā, Hiranyagarbha or Shiv-Pārvati, Last Day or Qayāmat, avatar and so on are seen to be faulty and cast aside.

Our consciousness, the boiling stream of mental impressions, of *bhāva-pavanā*, is rooted in the infinite past (*būḍhī*, primeval) and moves in an ebb and flow. It is a chain of causation, and has infinite potential to go on and on. The fire of observation is its breaking and ending. The fire of meditation is the ending of time into *bodhi*, that is, the emptying of *būḍhī* into *gurubānī*, intelligence.

Righteousness and dedicated contemplation, either within some tradition or ideology or not, can result in the acquisition of certain psychic powers, such as clairvoyance. These powers may develop (and also recede) in some people spontaneously or they may be mastered at will. Such people can be of help to others in healing etc., but there is always a danger of exaggeration, plus the ever-present possibility of dissimulation and the deception and humiliation of ordinary people. Trends like these in our society are dangerous and corrupting. Even when psychic powers have been of help, there is still no emptying of mental impressions, for sorrow is not rooted out. All that has happened is that there has been a little manipulation of energy in the psycho-physical complex, which is essentially of the field of the intellect. Some of us may invoke or receive some kind of force, possibly divine or angelic, and then perform healings or make some propaganda in the name of their religion, identifying that force from their own traditional background, and calling it Gorakhnath or the Archangel Gabriel or whatever, which in fact is any force, not necessarily what they name, drawn from the global consciousness.²⁶ Consciousness such as that of Gorakhnath who has lived so spiritually and gone beyond all the planes of life is capable of illuminating everything that comes into contact with it, whether in person or through sayings, but then it can be taken by us as a means of highlighting our own ideas and ideologies or occult practices instead of our sharing that intelligence rightly. Thus someone seriously treading the path may compose or receive some phrase or a mantra in the name of, say, Gorakh, such as "Guru Gorakh

Avadhūt” or “Sidh Gorakh Alakh Yoga”. This melody may contain vibrations of beauty and compassion, or the delicacy of a butterfly, but keep it simple and informal and free from all notions of devotion (bhakti). From time to time you may simply recollect this, and it may fill you with subtle vibrations of energy or may effect some melting of the upper layers of your consciousness, so that you become sensitive to forces from the inner world, or it may work as a surati. Whatever we do with it or appropriate it, it still belongs to the field of the intellect and no new seed of learning can germinate therein until we are unattached to it. In other words, there is no intrinsic learning because the intelligence is not awake.

It is still part of sorrow even though there may be some help, as in healing, or the experience of some power or some spiritual heights, even some saintliness. You may possess any of these powers, or money, position etc., or not, but as a human being what you are, and whether you are emptying through right meditation or not, are what matter the most.²⁷

²⁶ “When the mind is artificially made quiet, the upper layer of the mind is able to receive intimations, not only from its own unconscious, but from the collective unconscious; and the intimations are translated according to the conditioned mind. Therefore a Hitler can say he is guided by God in what he does, and somebody else in India that God is all for something quite different. It is a very simple psychological process which you can discover for yourself if you watch your own mind in action and see how it can hypnotize itself into tranquillity. Therefore, when the mind is forced into stillness through concentration, through conformity, through any kind of discipline or self-hypnosis, it is obviously incapable of discovering reality. It can project itself and hear

its own ugly voice, which we call the voice of God, but surely that is entirely different from the state of a mind that is really still.”

— Krishnamurti’s Talks 1949-1950 (Verbatim Report) … India, p64, in Weeraperuma, op. cit., p199

²⁷ sakati ahaiṛai misa ridha, kosa bala syū bāgo,
gorakha kahāī cālatī mārū, kāna gurū tau lāgo. (268)

Power is hunting, hoping for riches.
Keeping my distance, I rebel.
Gorakh says, I'll conquer this deceiver
and pay heed to the guru.

XI – RELATIONSHIP IS LIKE A MIRROR

It is possible to have certain experiences, some partial insights pertaining to certain theories or ideologies through what is technically known as energy transmission or *śaktipāt*, i.e. the transmission of power through some words or a mantra, a touch etc., but this is not the way of intelligence. Nobody can cross the stream of sorrow using aids, by being dependent on or following something or somebody, because then the creator of sorrow, the ego centre and its nature, desire, are not understood. We have to understand how mental impressions are formed and how they are erased or emptied, so that we can then proceed with the work of meditation and continue the process of emptying. The emptying of mental impressions is not in itself a slow process but to try to empty them, which inevitably involves thought, is a hindrance. The way of conventional religions is dogmatic righteousness, ideological passion and contemplation: the way of spirituality is righteousness, silent passion and meditation.

Our relationships are like a mirror in which we can naturally and easily see what we are. Watch the motives and feelings that come up in your various relationships — with a friend, an opponent, your father, mother, the young and the old, a flower, dirt, an animal, a child, nature, your possessions, your wife, husband, boyfriend or girlfriend. Watch and observe how you look, touch, speak, your gestures, maybe your mistakes, irritations etc., all of which are basically sensations and feelings. Sometimes because of insensitivity or unsteadiness of mind you may not immediately perceive

deep and subtle motives, but later, during periods of tranquillity, you will be able to see and understand those various motives and the deep subtle feelings associated with them. Observe them. Steadily observation of your feelings and sensations leads to the emptying and ordering of the mind.

God, that is, supreme intelligence, is not pleased or affected by any kind of flattery, idol worship and so on. Various words, sounds, gestures, rituals can awaken, attract, invoke certain forces, create some unusual effects, but all this pertains to the field of intellect. Intellect cannot touch or know intelligence and supreme intelligence. Intelligence knows intellect, it affects intellect. Meditation is intelligence, it transforms intellect, that is mental impressions, into intelligence. With the full transformation of all mental impressions, i.e. with the absolute emptying of the mind, comes grace, the revelation of supreme intelligence. The field of the intellect comprises all material things and all mental events — thoughts, feelings, sensations — and all these have different kinds of vibrations, which can be pleasant or unpleasant. See and feel various objects and their shapes and colours, different sounds, various faces and their changing expressions, and then steadily observe the associated feelings and reactions that arise in the mind — meditation, that is, intelligence is awake silent awareness.

God is not some supreme intelligent being, not a person or an entity, but supreme intelligence. We must have both faith and doubt. Faith means love of truth and the passion to enquire into truth. Doubt sharpens our enquiry into the

beliefs and ideas we and others hold and paves the way to escape from conventional religions. However, doubt still needs to be kept in check: we should enquire intelligently, but to doubt everything has no meaning. And meditation is to observe every feeling, whether it is doubt or anything else, and the clearing that comes through meditation is intelligence. We now know that meditation means observing feeling, whether it is doubt or anything else, and the unfolding that comes through meditation is intelligence.²⁸ We have to enquire into the mind, as the mind is the only field in which we can enquire in order to throw light on matters of the mind, sorrow and the way of intelligence. The enquiry into universal matter is diverse, but meditation is altogether a different enquiry, in which there is emptying of the mind and the unfolding of truth.

Meditation is arduous work because of our mistaken mental habits, which seek security in thought. However, when we are totally and seriously dedicated to this work, nature provides us with what we need.

²⁸ "If you doubt, that is, if you desire greatly to find out, you must let go of those things which you hold so dearly. There cannot be true understanding by keeping what you have. You cannot say, 'I shall hold on to this prejudice, to this belief, to this ceremony, and at the same time I shall examine what you say.' How can you? Such an attitude is not of doubt, it is not one of intelligent criticism."

— J. Krishnamurti, Verbatim Reports of Talks and Answers ... Adyar, India 1933-34, p30, in Weeraperuma, op. cit., p59

The desire to belong to this or that conventional religion, ideology or tradition has its roots in our tribal heritage, and further back in the animal herding instinct. The tendency in creatures to belong to a herd or a group is natural, being for physical security, convenience or survival. In nature there is harmony between various creatures and within herds. It is the same in the human family, in village life and so on. But when we try to seek psychological security in thought, that is, in ideas, we invent ideologies, religions, traditions and so on. By nature, thought is divided and when we try to find security in thought, it divides. There is no wholeness of mind, it prefers something and gets directed towards it. Then there is psychological dependency and no freedom. Thought obviously has a place in our lives, but there is no security in it. There is absolute security in intelligence. Intelligence is security.

XII – DRY SANDALWOOD

In Hinduism, or rather in Brāhmaṇism, a small part of Hinduism, it is declared that a *siddha* (an enlightened being) does not need to pray or worship, but that ordinary men must pray, worship, perform rituals, fast, recite mantras etc. for their spiritual progress. It is also declared that ordinary people are divided into different groups such as castes, classes, races and tribes. And it is also declared (hypocritically) legitimate that a *siddha* may live openly and freely among people, but that ordinary men and women should follow all kinds of rules and restrictions. This is more or less the same for all conventional religions.

Siddhas and saintly men and women all over the world say, “Everyone should live with a free and open mind. Be righteous in your life and your relationships. Be aware of mischievous greed, ego and so on, and live in fraternity and with a sense of responsibility. Have passion, silent passion for the supreme, and for that clean your mind. We have lived it and accomplished it, and become absorbed in it. Now, you

live it and discover it for yourselves.”²⁹ Time and again good and saintly men and women of clear insight see through the stupidities of conventional religions and blind traditions, but many times they are misunderstood with attachment or dislike: with attachment they are put on a pedestal and worshipped and when disliked they are criticised and persecuted.

A saint may be a man or a woman, farmer or engineer, monk or housewife. He or she can be of help for others in the awakening of intelligence. Nevertheless, we must have both faith and doubt.

A picture, drawing or photograph of a genuinely saintly

²⁹ sabada hamārā kharatara khāṇḍā, rahaṇī hamārī sācī,
lekhai likhī na kāgada mādī, so patrī hama bācī. (264)

Our word is a sharp sword,
our way of life is true,
it is not a written text nor pretty paper,
but I have got the message.

There are three kinds of *bodh* or understanding, namely: 1. *bodh* as what we see or read on paper etc. or hear from somebody; 2. *bodh* as our own rational thinking without depending on any person or book for psychological or religious matters; 3. *bodh* as observation of what is on the basis of freedom from the known by knowing its place and limit. Or, briefly, paper *bodh*, thinking *bodh*, observation *bodh*. Gorakh speaks of all these three *bodhs* in this Sabadī. The first two, whether they are clear or true words, or thoughtful, truthful living, have their place in our lives and also have their limit, and so we care for what Gorakh, Buddha and siddhas say. However, it is the observation *bodh* which is capable of ending time and sorrow, and effecting sweet dying.

person can emit a kind of subtle energy or vibration. The bones of a dead saint are like dry sandalwood releasing its scent. This may sound rather strange but it is simply a matter of vibrations. However, ego and attachment can confuse the matter here: we may certainly have a remarkable experience near a saint's tomb, but it is not necessary that we feel the same every time, neither is it necessary that everyone feel the same experience at the same place. Different people will have different experiences at different places and at different times. All that is necessary is that we remain steadily aware of our feelings and sensations at the time.

It is no great harm or loss if the remains of saintly people are not preserved, for there is no need to rely on such things. It is good to go to a qualified master for right guidance, but there is no need to request some energy from a saint, a tomb, a temple deity or a mantra, which can be dangerous because of the possibility of dependency, delusion, deception or disappointment. When an enlightened sage says that he is working in you when you are meditating or simply attentive, this really means that intelligence, *prajñā*, is present, and this is nothing to do with such person, alive or dead. So, be open to the immensity of intelligence, to the immensity of meditation.³⁰

³⁰ ghaṭi ghaṭi gorakha phirai nirūtā, ko ghaṭa jāge ko ghaṭa sūtā,
ghaṭi ghaṭi gorakha ghaṭi ghaṭi mīnā, āpā paracai gura mukhi cīnha.
(38)

Gorakh moves silently in every body,
in one he is awake, in another asleep.

Gorakh is in every body: Macchindra is in every body,
knowing yourself is the mark of the guru's word.

Some people say that just as we have relationships in our daily life, for instance friendship or kinship, why should we not have a relationship with a deity, an angel or some such being as well. Logically there would seem to be nothing wrong in this, and meditation does not deny that such a relationship is possible. However, it should be understood that meditation means to look at every kind of attachment and to empty every feeling.

Yogic practices such as *mahā mudrā*, *brahma mudrā*, *prānāyāma* can surely give a calm and peaceful state of mind. However, the achievement of a calm and peaceful state of mind is not their purpose. Yogic practices involve steady awareness of feelings and sensations, which is meditation. Nearly every conventional religion has used various yogic or yoga-like postures or gestures in its prayers, worship and rituals. Yoga goes beyond all such conventionally religious matters. Yogis have worked at their practices experientially so they could explore yoga independently of prayers or worship. These practices do not belong to any conventional religion: they are of psycho-physical help to the spiritual person. Meditation does not depend on yogic practices. Yoga is skill in action, skill in action is skill in thought, and skill in thought arises out of understanding. Understanding is intelligence.

There are various kinds of chanting of ancient verses or devotional singing, often accompanied by rhythmic body movements and music, in the name of religion. Mostly they are very skilful and artistic, and the peace or pleasure in them can bring a kind of refreshment to the body and mind. We

can devote some time to such things, either individually or collectively, but we must realise that devotional, romantic, heroic songs and so on can be composed in the name of God, deities, saints, leaders; and even young men and women attached to each other can compose such things in the name of each other. Thus, devotional songs may well be simply fanciful ideas, and mostly they are just that. Meditation is not limited to chanting ancient verses or to devotional singing and such practices. Without spiritual understanding these things are dry straw, a plaything in the name of religion. Nevertheless, we can appreciate and enjoy the aesthetic side of these and all other cultural practices, both western and eastern.

Ādeś, shalom, salām, juley, Good Day are some of the words used as a salutation or greeting, indicating goodwill or respect, or to say goodbye. Juley is a Ladakhi word. Shalom (Hebrew) and salām (Arabic) have a common origin. Ādeś is an Indian word used by Nath yogis. Ādeś literally means order, that is, harmony; it also means command, that is mastery, and thus it indicates attention, that is meditation. Meditation is order, security. Good Day expresses good wishes on meeting or parting during the day. Meditation is goodness. The words shalom, salām also indicate peace, security — it is preferable to use such greetings while being aware of your own feelings, whether friendliness, superiority, inferiority or whatever, in other words, meditatively.

XIII – MEDITATION IS TO OBSERVE EVERY FEELING

It is preferable to be a vegetarian. It seems that the human body is not by nature designed for flesh eating. However, human beings do eat flesh, fish and fowl, so clearly it cannot be stopped altogether.³¹ While the killing of animals or birds by human beings is against nature, this does not mean that we should not defend ourselves if necessary. So while destroying nature and killing wildlife is against nature, against universal law, it may be felt that hunting and killing birds and animals cannot be stopped altogether, either because of our heritage of violent mental impressions, or because of needs for food, pleasurable tastes etc. Thought can find explanations and excuses, but we should be aware

³¹ avadhū khārai khirai khātai jharai, mīṭhai upajai roga,
gorakha kahai sunau re avadhū, annai pāññi jogā. (140)

Avadhu! Salty food causes loss of energy,
acidic food is draining,
diseases are produced by sweet food.
Gorakh says, listen Avadhu, grains and water for yoga.

On initiation into the Nath Panth, Gorakh and *siddhas* give raw onion, *rotī* (bread) and *ghī* (butter) as the first normal food to a new yogi. Onion and garlic are accepted as parts of normal food for yogis, *sādhus* or seekers in their daily life in the Nath Panth. In the same spirit of moderation, the Buddha said to the monks, don't kill an animal to eat its flesh, don't have others kill it so as to eat its flesh, don't eat the flesh of an animal when you see it being killed, don't eat meat because you like it; however, when you are given meat as food during your alms begging, you should eat that and not waste it.

of the danger in this. Intelligence is compassion, but the universal law of reward and punishment follows right or wrong actions.

Every kind of mental impression will bear fruit, and in the flame of meditation these will be transformed. However, this does not mean that we can do wrong now and wipe out the effects in the future — that is self-deception — but this also does not mean that a butcher or an addict should not meditate. Everyone needs to meditate. And thus, we must try to find that kind of livelihood in which there is no violence or harm to others or to oneself. Those of a serious and dedicated spirit will surely find the right path.³²

It is legitimate to have a passion for the maintenance and development of scientific and technological knowledge, for if some technique or scientific theory is found to be inadequate, the mind is generally open to explore and change.³³ In this passion, too, we should be steadily aware of the feelings therein — meditation is to observe every feeling. But why should we have a passion for the survival of rituals, sacrifices, beliefs, ideologies, conventional religions? This passion comes out of ignorance, pride, attachment, greed. It is sustained by fear, anger, envy and so on, and is bound to be divisive and lead to conflict.

³² jīva sīva sange bāsā, badhi na khāibā rudhra māsā,
haṁsa ghāta na karibā gotā, kathanta gorakha nihāri potā. (227)

A living being and love live together.
Do not kill, nor eat flesh and blood,
do not take the life of your kin.
Gorakh says, see, they're your children!

However, ego matters in the way a superiority or inferiority complex is ingrained and are bound to come up in many ways — feel them, give no importance to the thoughts that try to interfere or murmur (a little spilling of energy here does not matter), observe every feeling throughout the face along with the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, or vice versa. Our daily life requires the use of thought — comparing, choosing, keeping things in relative order — which can be right or wrong, good or bad. Thought is relative, and any effort by it to bring order inwardly leads to sorrow. Sensations, feelings, thoughts, can be pleasing or painful, but they are not right or wrong, not good or bad; they are psychologically “what is”. There is no thought-desire evaluation, instead steady observation and emptying. Our challenge is this understanding, living in both time and the timeless.³⁴

Any human being is capable of intellectually understanding and directly perceiving the mechanism of the mind, and this

³³ Here Sūrajnath is thinking of the work of Thomas Kuhn, who, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), argued that scientific progress occurs not gradually but in jumps: at any given stage in the development of scientific knowledge, more and more events that cannot be explained by the current scientific theories begin to be noticed, and the only way they can be explained is by a shift in theory, i.e. by the development of a new theoretical approach, which Kuhn calls a “paradigm”. Interestingly, what usually happens is that the changeover often meets with resistance from established scientists who do not like to see the theories they have used all their professional lives being discarded.

is no obstacle to the work of emptying. However, full insight into the mind, i.e. genuine religion, comes with sustained spiritual practice or with becoming absolutely empty. In other words, you gain insight into emptiness here and now,

³⁴ biralā jāṇanti bhedānibheda, biralā jāṇanti doi pakṣa cheda,
biralā jāṇanti akatha kahāñī, biralā jāṇanti sudhi budhi kī bāñī. (66)

They are rare who know difference and non-difference
They are rare who know the difference between two sides
They are rare who know the untold story
They are rare who know insightful and wise words.

It is important to understand the matter of difference and non-difference, and that of both sides. In daily life we need to choose or avoid many things, accepting or rejecting them, or be neutral about some of them. However, at the same time, inwardly, meditation or observation of what is, of feelings and sensations, is choiceless work. That is, inwardly it is not a question of accepting or being attracted to feelings we like, or of rejecting or avoiding those we don't like – inwardly we steadily observe everything moment to moment. This is the fundamental insight of living in time (out there), and at the same time in timelessness (inwardly). Timelessness is the untold story of innocence or freedom from the known by knowing its place and limit; with our awareness being open, with the depths of the emptied mind, insightful and wise speech becomes possible.

adharā dhare bicāriyā, dhara yā hī māī soī,
dhara adhara paracā hūvā, taba utī nāhī koī. (98)

Seek emptiness in the manifesting,
truly - it is there in the manifesting.
When the manifesting and emptiness are beheld,
then there is nothing!

and once it is achieved, you will be open to the immensity of intelligence, open to observe, receive and know. We understand the sequence of events in the operations of the mind. These events are sensations, feelings, thoughts. Meditation is also an event but it is altogether different; it is silence, it is emptiness. We might compare the mind to a drum, which reverberates as it is beaten: the passion to know what is essential for daily life and what is the sequential process of spiritual development is the right kind of beat for the drum of the mind. Keep meditating, observing and dissolving every feeling that arises. Insights will come sooner or later — hold fast to your passion, be prepared to sustain it for as long as it takes.

Thought cannot plan the task of emptying. It has no access to the operation of intelligence. Emptying mental impressions is the operation of intelligence. Meditation is intelligence. This emptying of the mind is not an inherently slow process but thought is the hindrance. While meditating, thought may repeatedly take over our awareness because of its habit of posing itself as capable of resolving problems, but thought cannot solve our problems of greed, anger, worry, fear etc. It is best that we meditate most of the time, but we should also set aside one or two hours' solitude every day for serious meditation, which will flow into and affect the other hours of the day. The meditator will become aware that if the flame of meditation is not maintained, it dies down. However, there is hope — it can always be rekindled.

Whenever feelings or sensations or buried thought chains come up in the mind, thought immediately comes to interfere

and seek a solution, but it only intensifies feeling without finding a solution. Thought and desire go together: they are inseparable. Trying to find a solution, thought modifies or suppresses or does something with its calculations, but it cannot uproot the feeling, it cannot empty the mind. Thought is the problem, for when it tries to bring order to the mind it only makes it more complicated and disordered. The mind needs order to function effectively and when it knows only the way of thought it tries to find order in thought and ideas; it tries to bring order to all its thought by more thought! This wrong habit of the mind can be stopped and transmuted — meditation is the capacity to bring order by emptying disorder. Meditation itself is order. In other words, when thought realises that it cannot bring order to the mind and becomes quiet, apart from normal day-to-day work, and gives way to intelligence to operate on its own through attention, then, even if thoughts keep murmuring on, order is achieved through the emptying of mental impressions.

When a loved person dies, there is a great upheaval in the mind, and very deep-rooted emotions, that is feelings and sensations, are brought to the surface. In such cases, do not suppress them, do not avoid them, stay with them, steadily observing them — perhaps there will be weeping, and distortions in the face accompanying the sensations — observe all this steadily. Sometimes the problems of daily life may make people think of committing suicide. Suicide is seldom the solution to anyone's problems. Instead, you should uproot the mental impressions that are the cause of such feelings. In thoughts of suicide feelings are very intense — remain steadily aware of them, and thereby naturally and

easily come out of the problem. Pain and pleasure are both rooted in each other. With feelings of pleasure or pain in personal, social, legal or political matters, remain steadily aware of them.

A person may travel far from home and often remember and dwell upon things that happened there in the past, with the result that there are emotional ups and downs. Meditate on them, steadily observe those emotions. This does not, however, mean that we should not care for our relatives or cut off communication with them. And we should love our homeland, the land and the people where we live and above all mother earth.

Especially with the onset of puberty strong sexual sensations, desires and thoughts are constantly present. Sensations flow through the body like the blowing of the wind through trees. Do not suppress or avoid sexual feelings. Just observe them, direct all mental energy towards the feelings and sensations: it is thought, not sex, that is the problem; it goes on creating images and thus mental impressions. Each time they arise in the mind, stop thinking and observe your feelings. Nearly everybody's mind is so heavily burdened that there is hardly a fraction of a second's gap between two thoughts. The murmuring of thoughts may not be stopped and that is not what you should aim at. Let the thoughts murmur on, whatever they are, but give full attention to feelings so that your mental energy is not dissipated. Meditate primarily on feelings, plus the sensation in the centre of the upper lip. The meditating mind will see layer after layer of conditioning become exposed and wither

away, and with this emptying you will feel energetic as the mind gains energy. In fact, the practice of meditation is not limited to a particular occasion or a problem. In other words, we should not just meditate when our situation has become bad, when a problem has got us by the throat, but we should be meditating all the time, so that every kind of mental impression, even great tragedies, is emptied and finished naturally and easily. We should meditate all the time, we must be serious about meditating, for if we are not, the flame of steady awareness, that is, meditation, fades away.

In our meditation we shall notice that our thoughts may continue, like a murmuring or ripples on the surface of deeper water, but that will not prevent us from penetrating deep down into our feelings. Sometimes a powerful thought or feeling rises up from the depths of the mind, or as a result of some external contact, and overwhelms us. Meditation is simply to observe what happens. Steady awareness is not illogical, but logic cannot touch it. Logic falls within the field of reason and intellect, whereas steady awareness is intelligence. Reason and logic alone cannot solve all our problems. They cannot eradicate conditioning, or empty mental impressions. In this regard, logical argumentation is futile. We must meditate and actually experience the emptying of mental impressions. And when we do, then the perception, the insight, which is intelligence, unfolds and becomes our own, not something borrowed from somewhere else. Intellectual understanding is like a flower without perfume. Intelligence is that perfume.

One evening, Sūrajnath was meditating with open eyes, sitting comfortably inside his room, facing an open door. It

was a small two-room house in a remote corner of the farm. Suddenly a black-brown snake about a metre long slid in and stopped by the side of the door two metres away. They were both staring at each other. The snake assumed the curved “u” pose, ready to attack and defend itself, its body rigid. Sūrajnath experienced a number of sensations — he wanted to drive the snake out as it was getting dark and it was necessary to act before night fell. He always kept a stick with him, but that day he had accidentally left it at his parents’ house which was in another corner of the farm. He took his pillow as a shield and slowly, carefully, keeping his eyes on the snake, he tried to drive it out by beating the pillow on ground between them. The snake raised its head a little, causing another sensation — the snake appeared very determined. Again he tried beating the pillow on the ground, but it fiercely attacked the pillow twice in rapid succession. This time Sūrajnath experienced a strange tremendously burning sensation throughout his body. He had backed into a corner, so he moved to another side keeping the pillow between them. The snake attacked a third time with a slight movement, and then went into another room. Surajnath was frightened, but remained steadily aware of his fear and other feelings and sensations. He carefully left his little house, closing the door, and slept that night at his parents’ house. All night he was prey to a variety of thoughts and feelings relating to the incident, but he steadily observed the feelings aroused as well as the sensation in the centre of the upper lip. The next morning he and his younger brother got ready, wearing boots and carrying sticks either to kill the snake or let it out.

They opened the door carefully, went in and began searching everything very carefully using the sticks. Finally they found it, as expected, in a corner behind folded bedding. They had to kill it. Surajnath was aware of his brother's courage, of his own relief and a feeling akin to mourning for the death of the snake. That day his mother and brother had the area surrounding the house thoroughly cleared and told him to be very careful in future.

It is natural and healthy to be sensitive. When we come into contact with nasty odours, ugly scenes, violence, bad thoughts etc., we react with feelings of, say, disgust and with characteristic facial expressions. Similarly, in contact with perfume, flowers, gentle people, pleasant thoughts etc., we react with appropriate feelings and sensations. We should feel the pain, pleasure and troubles of others: this is sensitivity. We should be sensitive and alive to things happening around us in creatures and in nature. To meditate does not mean being dull or indifferent, but neither does it mean treating different feelings as equal. We can perceive right or wrong because of feelings and sensations — meditation is the right action inwardly, and we shall then do whatever has to be done outwardly, with care, and affection if appropriate.

You may notice that your mind has wandered off into thoughts for some minutes or even for an hour or more, and you become aware of your non-attention and will feel uneasy and bad for being inattentive. Instead of giving in to those feelings of uneasiness and badness, just observe them. Do not blame yourself, just be serious and alert to meditate. And

when you are relating to somebody or something, an individual or some work, then give your total attention to that, for that too is meditation; otherwise mostly remain meditating inwardly.

XIV – SPIRITUAL SCHOOLS

There are schools throughout the world — siddha, sufi, zen and so on — offering spiritual teaching and meditation: no one has a monopoly on spirituality. The truly religious spirit may belong formally to this or that school, but at the same time he or she is free from the conventions that are followed in the name of religion. Religion, i.e. spirituality, should not be a matter of tradition. While there is no real need to belong to any particular school, in practice we may go to one to see, know and learn, and then move on. We should do whatever is necessary in order to live, for food, shelter, clothing, conveyance and so on, and do it righteously; but we should never fall into the trap or the rut of what Surajnath has called “conventional religions” — ideas, beliefs, dogmas, fantasies, utopias etc. True religion is a universal law that is common to all and impartial to all.

Attention arises from emptiness — there is no “how” to know it, no method of knowing it. Oh! it is very simple. There is no method or “how” of knowing the sound of blowing wind, a running stream, the humming sound of insects, open sky. Likewise, there is no “how”, no method for remaining steadily aware of our feelings in our facial changes and sensations. Attention can of course be aware of “what is” in general, it can be focused on this or that depending on changing situations, or it can be consciously directed on something specific. To observe out of the past and to observe afresh are fundamentally different. Where mentally there is “me”, there is bound to be “not me”. When the “me” that is past observes “what is”, then “what is”

becomes subject to the past. The past, i.e. thought, the observer and its subject, that which is observed, become the same psychologically — observer and observed become the same. Psychologically, the observer is the observed; we are not different from greed and fear but we are greed and fear. There is nothing that is new. Thought is transition, it cannot go beyond, so it tries to find security or escape in itself and projects ideas of the soul, God, heaven, hell, divine agents, utopia, ideologies, conventional religions etc. This is all because of ignorance of the universal law. Mental impressions represent ignorance, and uprooting them the ending of ignorance and the deepening of intelligence.

It is of great benefit when societies have meditation centres, religious academies with lodging, boarding and related facilities run by teachers to guide large numbers of people in meditation. This will allow more and more people to experience the awakening of intelligence, they will keep awake the practice of meditation through succeeding generations, and so help empty mental impressions and alleviate more and more sorrow, so that heaven is not just a far off dream, but here and now in our earthly life. Communal halls, buildings, cells with adequate facilities and good natural surroundings are indispensable for group meditation. A plain, clean, uncluttered hall is the best for group meditation. We may keep some special picture or sculpture in our private room. A teacher may be a man or woman, householder or monk. There may be rules and discipline for regulating men's and women's behaviour, but on the basis of fundamental equality. It is also necessary that there be rules for good administration. Good moral standards

of correct behaviour are essential in order to protect the sanctity of the place from untoward scandals, greed and so on.

When really serious meditation work is desired, retreats of some 10 or 20 days are of immense benefit. For the first three days the practice should consist of steady observation of the breath near the nostrils. This is followed by observation for one to two days of the sensation in the centre of the upper lip. For the remaining days, observation should focus primarily on *feelings*, and then on the sensation in the centre of the upper lip. Whenever the need for steadiness of the mind is felt, one should return to focusing on the sensation in the centre of the upper lip, continuously if necessary, and then on feelings. In this way we may easily and naturally enter into the depths of meditation. However, this does not mean that we need at least ten days of serious meditation work in order to gain insight into meditation — this can happen much sooner.

In serious meditation retreats³⁵, the students should be ready to sit to meditate at about 5 a.m. They sit meditating continuously for about one and a half hours, after which there is a one hour break for a light breakfast. They then sit meditating from about 8 to 11 a.m., but after each hour there is a break of 5 to 10 minutes for water, the toilet etc. Then

³⁵ This account of a meditation camp schedule is based on Surajnath's experience of the schedule at the vipassanā meditation camp at Igatpuri, for which he is most grateful, and, more particularly, on his experience from his own practice of meditation.

there is a two-hour lunch break at about midday or a little earlier, when they have a good vegetarian meal, followed by a short rest. The food should be nutritious, well cooked and tasty. Then they sit for meditation from about 1 to 5 p.m., with 5- to 10-minute breaks every hour. The teacher will give regular but brief and clear guidance on how to observe the breathing, then the sensation in the centre of upper lip, and then feelings and sensations; he or she will also attend to individual problems that arise, giving but brief proper individual guidance (though the real reply to the student comes from within through his or her meditation work). This should be done calmly so as not to disturb or interrupt the other students. In the evening there is a one-hour break, in which a small amount of very light food such as rice, milk or fruit should be given to the students. They again sit meditating for some time, and then the teacher will give a brief speech on spiritual subjects and meditation. They go to bed at about 9 p.m. At the breaks during the day they should be continuously aware of what they are doing — bathing, eating, drinking, walking etc. — and of the feelings and sensations that arise. And while going to sleep they should remain seriously meditating so that their meditation will enter and continue into sleep automatically. The body needs its rest, but meditation is the rest for the mind. No smoking, drinking or drug-taking is allowed. While meditating, students may sit in some meditative āsana or otherwise comfortably, but should not lean against a wall etc. unless required because of physical disability. The students should not talk amongst themselves, and speak for the minimum necessary with the teacher and management. It is best that

they spend most of their time in meditation, sitting, with eyes closed. A proper meditation course like this should run for no less than a week, so that the students can have sufficient guidance and practice in meditation. The above schedule is a suggestion, and teachers may modify it intelligently.

The expenses of meditation centres can be arranged in various ways — individual payments, public donations, state grants. However, care should be taken to ensure that meditation centres do not turn into businesses. Teachers should not promote any conventional religion or ideology. Teachers are not authorities, and so there should be no psychological dependency on them. Teachers are just friendly guides. Meditation can be hard work, particularly at the beginning, and so the adept or the teacher does not perform any miracles, he or she just sits meditating and giving guidance when needed. Guidance can be given collectively or individually as required.

In serious meditation retreats all activities, such as bathing, meals, rest periods and sleep, meditation hours with short breaks for water or toilet, should be well planned. And above all the management of the meditation centre should be careful, watchful, disciplined, friendly, affectionate and compassionate. The management includes all the staff, from the adept teacher to the sweeper. It should give every kind of necessary service to the body, mind and heart of the meditator. Meditation centres and religious places are impartially open to all human beings for meditation, and are also subject to state laws. Care should be taken in the case of people with some sickness or a contagious disease to ensure

that they are capable of following the retreat's programme and that no one else is affected. Although we are talking about meditation centres, religious academies etc., this does not mean that meditation or spiritual teaching is restricted to these places. It is an open subject. Spiritual schools or centres may come and go, they may be modified or revived over time, but what is important is awakened spiritual understanding, awakened intelligence³⁶ — and this should be impartially open to everyone, anywhere.

The building or room being used should be kept for meditation only, so that any untoward vibrations are kept at bay. However, we should not be dogmatic about this, as meditating minds can easily dispel any untoward psychic vibrations. In this what works is intelligence and intelligence does not belong to anybody, it is universal, it works through the mind that has been or is being emptied through meditation.

The meditating mind can easily know how in relationships one can be affected by another's feelings, facial changes, bodily gestures, words etc. Everyone can see this, or, rather,

³⁶ gūdarī juga cyāri tāī āī, gūdarī sidha sādhikā calāī,
gūdaṛī māī atīta kā bāsā, bhaṇanta gorakhanātha machindra kā dāsā.
(197)

The ascetic's rags have come down through the four ages,
kept alive by siddhas and yoginis.
The timeless lives in those rags,
says Gorakhnath, Macchindra's servant.

everyone knows this, but consciously or unconsciously because of our wrong mental habits there is suppression, avoidance, modification, calculation with attraction or repulsion — that is, with thought and desire — and thus mental impressions are created. Therefore we should be attentive. When memories of past incidents come to mind, which may happen again and again, simply and calmly observe the associated feelings and sensations. Nature, life, is such an open mystery that for its unfolding what is needed is attention, in other words, meditation.

The mind is an open book — read it and simply watch its changing flow. Give no importance to the murmuring and chattering thoughts that go on. Just let your thoughts come and go. As feelings and sensations wither away, so too do untoward thoughts, chains or associations of thoughts. Many of our recorded chains of thought have to do with prejudice or antipathy. This can emerge as conflicting ideas about animals, castes, classes, skin colour, race, conventional religions, family members or nations. While meditating, we should give no importance to such chains of association. Otherwise we shall become entangled with our thoughts, and there is the danger that simply in observing thoughts our meditation will go no deeper. Some religious teachers advise us to observe steadily or to witness thoughts — however, to observe every thought is actually to observe the feelings that are contained within them or give rise to them. Some rare human beings may be in an advanced state when they are born. Such a person will have little or no untoward thought murmuring in the mind. In fact, such a brain does not even record untoward thoughts. Meditation is not arduous for such

a person as he or she is unaffected by the rough waves of mental impressions. Even the average person, who has been meditating seriously for a good time, can sometimes have an experience of a state of mind in which there is no ego, no murmuring of thoughts, a state of mind which is very alert, awake, steady, and quite blissful. However, this cannot be expected, anticipated, nor predicted. It comes on its own and goes on its own.

Words have certain meanings, and most people unconsciously have a positive or negative attitude towards words such as greed, hatred, fear, love, beauty, anger, envy and affection. As a result they experience pleasant or painful reactions when hearing or using such words, reacting with attraction or repulsion with respect to their meaning and thinking of becoming something other than what they actually are. We must be very alert about stopping this by remaining steadily aware of feelings and sensations. Meditation means the end of recording, the end of thought, and thought, that is, "me", is afraid of this, so it will find ten different ways of reappearing. It may start to think about meditation, or it may appear as desire for the unfolding of truth, or greed for the eradication of mental impressions. In that case also, just be aware of that and let it go, steadily observing the greed or whatever the feeling or sensation may be. Observation of thoughts and reactions actually means observation of the feelings therein.

Meditation is the creative action — it is love, which is intelligence. Creativity cannot be subjected to demands to do this and not do that. Love can grow from attachment, greed,

envy and so on; it can also grow from free rational thinking; and love flowers out of meditation. Love is life. To live the life of meditation, i.e. to meditate, is what we need. In other words, feelings of love, hatred etc. are one thing, and love as intelligence that becomes focused through meditation and empties every feeling, including those of love, compassion, is fundamentally a different thing. There is nothing more to say about love as supreme intelligence that reveals itself, on its own, in absolute emptying.

Nature works through you and me, through every being and of course nature works independently of all this. Sometimes we can simply observe nature around about us without describing it, or just listen steadily to the humming and chattering sounds of insects. This too is meditation, and this outward direction of our attention will act as a counterbalance to the inward direction, for otherwise we may become rather self-centred. Even so, most of the time we need to work on the mind, remaining steadily aware of the feelings and sensations within ourselves. Be aware of and observe the psycho-physical tensions, jerks, tremors, pains, pleasures, anger, hatred, fear, desire, greed, affection, envy, compassion, sympathy, coolness, heat, smells, sounds, and the bubbling, throbbing, pulsing, pushing, pressing, stroking, biting, stinging, burning sensations and feelings that well up from the depths of the body-mind complex. Whatever these feelings or sensations may be, just remain continuously and steadily aware of them. It is said that feelings are the essence of sensations, that both are related, but in fact we may often notice that some sensations rise and pass independently in different parts of the body, apparently having no effect on or

relation to any feeling in the face. Whatever may be the case, all we should do is remain steadily aware of the feelings or sensations.

Our face is like a screen on which all the senses are closely related and which reflects every feeling quite naturally and clearly, since the depths of our mind are naturally revealed in our facial expressions. The central point of the upper lip is constantly vibrating, so that becoming aware of this sensation will be of help in learning what attention is; it can help for moving into feelings, for observing feelings attentively. Every feeling, sensation or thought is impermanent and changing, but the small vibrating sensation at the upper lip is always there. To start with we may not perceive this ever-vibrating sensation immediately, and in that case we should just remain aware of the flow of breath at the end of nostrils and on the upper lip, simply observing the touch of the air we breathe. In a short time, some minutes or hours, depending on the person, we shall become aware of the sensations in that area of the lip. As we become aware of it, we should discard the awareness of our breathing, there is no need to continue with that. With this practice will come a sharpening of our sensitivity. The point of awareness may be narrowed down to the very minimum, say a pin-point in the centre of the upper lip, and this too is the sharpening of sensitivity. Sensitivity can be sharpened in many ways, but it is good that meditation and sharpening of sensitivity go together. We shall discover that pleasure or pain, problem or confusion, each of these is a kind of feeling that needs to be emptied in the flame of meditation. Whenever you have a problem or feel confused about your meditation work, and

you feel you are not getting a breakthrough, then just focus your attention calmly on the sensation in the centre of the upper lip, being totally aware of it, and stay meditating like this for some time, neither suppressing nor avoiding those feelings, and then the mental impressions will be emptied, and you will get an unfolding, you will achieve a breakthrough. Or you can focus on observing your feelings attentively and closely, while at the same time remaining aware of the sensation in the centre of the upper lip, and your observation will be effortless and steady. Meditation is effortless effort. Through steady awareness of the sensation in the centre of the upper lip, or of feelings, you will come to know that intelligence, i.e. meditation, is very vulnerable. When thought gives way to intelligence, it is present; otherwise it disappears.

The flame of meditation is the distillation of essence, which is the absorption and transformation of mental impressions. This is the miracle of all miracles. Meditation is the unconditional challenge and all-time need. Meditation is the tuning of the harp of the mind. It is holy and divine work. Meditation is a holy war, and the conventionally religious war tigers will want to run away from this holy war and find escape in some belief, ideology or utopia. But, look, life without meditation is sorrow. Both pleasure and pain are rooted in each other. The peace that can be achieved through some kind of contemplation or the intimations from the global unconscious by means of a spiritualist medium are not beyond thought and can create deception, and our minds can become entangled in some kind of dependency on these. Intimations or intuitions about worldly things can be right or

wrong, but we should be very careful about this. We may get an answer from the depths of the mind to what we are seeking as a result of the induced peace. We have to be observant, and submit what we have learned to the test of experience. However, in such matters there is no ending of mental impressions, no ending of sorrow. And even if there is some ending of mental impressions from directing attention towards feelings and sensations, or some feeling of release, this is like taking a drop from the ocean or picking a leaf from a huge tree, and there will still be dependency and no right understanding of the way of spirituality and meditation, and still no ending of sorrow.

Meditation is the emptying of mind in which flashes of insight may come at any time, revealing the truth. Meditation itself is truth, love and beauty. Truth, love and beauty go together. We recognise beauty in a face, a body or of any material thing — that's OK. However, behind the beautiful face there can be a deceitful mind. Beauty is a balanced mind. This does not mean that imbalances such as craziness, hatred or anger may not come to the surface, but the very awareness of imbalance is balance, the very awareness of non-attention is attention. In attention there is no division, no fragmentation as to what to do and what not to do.

For the demands of our everyday life we need to act physically, but to end psychological scars (*samskāras*) or mental impressions — in other words ignorance and sorrow — what we need is to meditate so that there is emptying and ordering. There are some people who fall prey to a passion to awaken, invoke or attract some spirit or divine forces. They practise rituals, worship, mantras etc. and find

themselves in the grip of some bizarre force, some psychological crisis, which is basically sensations-feelings, and they cannot find a way out. Anyone in a crisis like this, or indeed at any other time, should drop what he or she has been practising, and patiently observe the ever-vibrating sensations in the upper lip, and will find that he or she comes out of the crisis easily and naturally. The crisis is bound to end; in this what works is emptiness and intelligence.

There are some who, in the name of religion and spirituality, will ask, “Why observe feelings and sensations, which are impermanent, something inferior?”, and will tell you “You are already that intelligence, that divine thing, that happiness (*ānanda*). Contemplate this or practise that in the name of God to prepare yourself”, but these people are avoiding “what is” and getting into something intellectual. You cannot live the truth of the moment with any form of thought. Look, thought itself is a hindrance in this. Observation of “what is” is freedom from thought, from ego. Some people claim that in observing “what is” your mind wanders into thoughts, and so returning to observing “what is” again and again is simply *pratyāhāra*. *Pratyāhāra* means withdrawing the senses from perceptions and concentrating on a given object of contemplation again and again. *Pratyāhāra* and *dhāranā*, i.e. continuously holding onto something, are said to be stages in the achievement of *samādhi*. However, these people do not see that *pratyāhāra* is concentrating by avoiding “what is” and is necessarily an activity of the partial brain, a matter of thought and contemplation. The word *dhyāna* is conventionally used in the sense of contemplation, but sometimes in the sense of meditation. (See Chapter I for we

use the terms “meditation” and “contemplation.”) The only way for that silent intelligence to become focused and to operate is to be free of ego and observe “what is” moment to moment. There is no other way to end sorrow and ignorance.³⁷ Someone may ask that if he or she neither reacts to nor observes feelings and sensations, and practises indifference, then what? Then he or she is lowering their consciousness to the plant level. See for yourselves, when you observe the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, then you are not only in contact with the stream of your mind, but naturally penetrating into it, into feelings and sensations; you are observing the book of your mind, which is you, in other words, the book of life. And you may be able to meditate seriously while you are engaged in day-to-day activities or not, but surely you can turn your sleeping hours into the most serious meditation hours and thereby experience deep emptying and ordering of your consciousness, which is the awakening of intelligence and ending of ignorance and sorrow, and is all in one movement.

Life is never known, because what is known is time past, a dead thing. The truth is a mystery, it cannot be caught in words. Do we feel the silence, the mystery?

³⁷ vede na sāstre katebe na kurāṇe, pustake na bañcyā jāī,
te pada jānā biralā jogī, aura dunī saba dhandhai lāī. (6)

It's not in the Vedas, scriptures,
holy books or the Quran –
it can't be read in books.
Rare yogis know that path,
and the rest of the world is deluded.

XV – YOGA TERMINOLOGY

Important Yogic Terms:

It is important that we understand the meaning of key yogic words. Right insight into yogic terms became clear to Surajnath in his spiritual journey through meditation, and he is also indebted to the texts of Gorakhnath, the Buddha and Jiddu Krishnamurti, and to *vipassanā* meditation. Some may have different opinions about the issues and the yogic terms discussed in this text, but this is an open subject that should be explored with an open and enquiring mind, with thoughtfulness and through meditation.

Yoga means coincidence, union, yogic practices, but this is the ordinary meaning. In the spiritual sense yoga means spirituality, the nature of things, absorption, as we have already seen. The pioneer yogi Gorakhnath defines yoga by the Hindi expression *alakh vigyān*. *Alakh* = *a* + *lakh*. *A* means no, not, un-, free from; plus *lakh* (from *lakhanā*, to see, giving *lakh*, *lakhit*, *lakhā huā*, seen, having seen or known) and thus the seen, the known. In Sanskrit we have *a* + *lakṣya*. *Lakṣya* = aim, ideal, goal, something in the future, which is always on the basis of the known, the past. The *alakh* sense is to know the place and limit of the seen, the known, and is thus freedom from the seen, the known. It is to remain with the unknown, to live in youthfulness, consciously. In other words, it is to be open, to be a *bālā* – a Gorakh Bālā. Awareness is thus free from the known, it is choiceless, effortless, it is emptiness. *Bināñī* or *vināñī* is from *bināñā* or *vināñā*, that is, *vigyān*, *vi* + *gyāna*, *vi* = pure, uncontaminated, *gyān* or *gyāna* = knowledge, wisdom. Thus

alakh vigyān means choiceless, pure knowledge, awareness, and whoever lives so is an *alakh vigyānī*. And thus we have definitions of yoga and a yogi in Gorakhnath's words, viz. *Joga alakh bināñ* "Yoga is *alakh vigyān*" and, *Jogī alakh bināni* "A yogi is an *alakh vigyānī*".

Mala literally means dirt, and it also means untoward accumulations in the body, such as fat etc.; psychologically *mala* means mental impression, *samskāra*; *nirodha* = cleansing, uprooting; *kundalinī* = consciousness, which is composed of three-and-a-half coils; sleeping *kundalinī* = sleeping consciousness, non-attention, awareness conditioned by thought and desire; awake *kundalinī* = awake consciousness, attention, steady, alert awareness, consciousness aware of itself;³⁸ *mana* = mind, psyche, consciousness; *mana* and *citta* are synonymous; *cetanā* = awareness. *Mana* can have two meanings, the first refers to the harmony of brain, body and heart, that is, meditation, and the second refers to the divisive activity of thought and desire. *Dhyāsa* means contemplation and *dhyāna* means meditation. Traditionally, the word *dhyāna* is sometimes used in the sense of *samādhi* or contemplation, or as a stage in the process of achieving higher *samādhi* states.

³⁸ The word *kundalinī* is used differently in reference to such things as *cakras* and *kundalinī*, energy transmission (*śaktipāt*) and *kundalinī*, some sensations in the spine and *kundalinī*, but in all these it relates to some aspect of consciousness through contemplation or some work of the intellect, in which there is the possibility of being puzzled or committing mistakes — the meditator does not need to go into these matters of the intellect.

Nādī means a channel, stream or thread. The term *nādī* has a very wide significance. The whole of our psycho-physical mechanism may be characterised as an integrated group of various *nādīs*. Every function of the body-mind complex is a kind of *nādī*. There are many many *nādīs*. The physiological process of taking in such substances as air, food or drink is *prāna nādī*. The mechanism concerned with flushing out such substances as faeces, urine, sweat and exhaled air is *apāna nādī*; digestion is *samāna nādī*; producing sound is *udāna nādī*; metabolism *vyāna nādī*. *Vijñāna nādī* means cognition, the process of sensory contact; *samjñā nādī* recognition, the perception mechanism; *vedanā nādī* means the sensation-feeling mechanism; and *samskāra nādī* means the process of creating mental impressions, mental formation, reaction and conditioning. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, thinking and their associated contact mechanisms in the brain are various *nādīs*. The mind is thus a tremendously complex mechanism. All the *nādīs* are interrelated. One such function, the *dhanañjaya vāyu*, works to remove dead body cells from the body and continues working even after the death of the physical organism and decomposes the body matter into universal matter. Indeed, all psychosomatic mechanisms or functionings are part of and intricately related with universal functionings. The whole functioning of the body-mind complex, i.e. the functioning of the *nādīs*, is sensations and vibrations: thoughts, feelings, sensations, movements of the mind are basically all vibrations. Ideas about seed mantras, colours, deities, siddhis associated with cakras or energy centres are thought matters. A meditator needs to see the limit of the

known, and remain free from it, free from such ideas, in order to pursue correct spiritual exploration. With the known, you are bound to run into confusion.

Siddhi means psychic or occult power, for example the power of clairvoyance. There are different kinds of siddhis, and the meditating mind may or may not encounter them. Contemplation practices in the expectation of worldly gain may bring their associated siddhis, though there is the possibility of psychic problems and complications. Siddhis in themselves are not bad, but for the awakening of siddhis the mind must be very mature and sensitive, and when the mind is so mature and sensitive there is no need of siddhis! A mind meditating with righteousness and silent passion is totally secure, and there is no possibility of psychic problems or complications because it is unattached. All this is quite simple. It is not important to master some siddhis, some psychic powers, some natural laws — what is the most important is the understanding and emptying of the mind.

The understanding of *idā nādī*, *pingalā nādī* and *sushumna nādī* is said to be very important, but the understanding of the *sushumna nādī* is of the greatest importance. The *idā* and *pingalā*, or attraction and repulsion, could be said to be related and opposites of each other; but *suṣumnā* or *suṣamanā* (*sūkṣma mana* or subtle mind) is not like these. *Suṣumnā* or attention is the spontaneous awakening of the divine fire, *bodhi*. The other *nādīs* are all connected with psycho-physical mechanisms, but with *sushumna* we should note that in itself it is not a kind of mechanism — it is that state of mind in which silence prevails. Thus, *sushumna* is

meditation. Physically, *idā* means the left nostril, the left side of the body, cool, negative and so on, and *pingalā* means the right nostril, the right side of body, hot, positive and so on, and *sushumnā* means central, neither positive nor negative, balancing. Psychologically, *idā* means repulsion (*dvesha*), *pingalā* means attraction (*rāga*) and *sushumnā* means attention, meditation. The *samskāra* *nādī* (*samskāra* mind mechanism) and the *idā nādī* and *pingalā nādī* all mean the same. *Prajñā*, bodhi, *sushumnā*, awakened *kundalini*, attention, meditation, intelligence are all synonymous. Or rather *prajñā*, that is, silent energy beyond name and form, awakens on its own, through attention. Meditation is the tuning of the brain-mind energy in silence, energy in harmony with intelligence, it operates on the brain-mind to empty it, and though silence is a mystery we can quite simply live it. But the energy of attraction or repulsion, whether it is simple or refined, or relating to any secular activity such as politics, arts or literature, acquiring siddhis and so on, is both divided and divisive. The meditating mind keeps all these things in their right place — it may make a mistake but it is open to see and learn from mistakes. And of course there is less likelihood of committing mistakes. *Sūrya* means the sun, the right nostril, the right side of the body, attraction, *pingalā*, the qualities of the stomach, heat, positive energy. *Candra* means the moon, the left nostril, the left side of the body, repulsion, *idā*, the qualities of the brain, coolness, negative energy. *Pavan* means air, breathing, sensations, feelings or any movement in the body-mind complex. *Bindu* means a drop, a spot, semen and sexual fluids in women, sensations, energy, awareness focused. *Sakti* means energy,

force, power, life energy. Prāna means the in-breath, life energy, creativity, vāyu, nādī. Apāna means the out-breath, a type of vāyu or nādī. Vāyu means air, nādī, creative energy. Yogic terms relate to the working of energy within the body-mind complex.

Urdhva oshtha madhya vedanā is the sensation in the centre of the upper lip. *Samprajñāna* is composed of *sam* standing for *samyak* meaning right, right action, plus *prajñāna* meaning an awareness attuned with intelligence (*prajñā*). Thus, remaining aware of the sensation in the centre of the upper lip is by nature a most convenient samprajñāna — this central and lightly vibrating ever-present sensation is a master key to meditation. Surati and *samprajñāna* are synonymous.

Tatta, or *tattva*, is a key yogic term. Tatta literally means truth, a true state or nature, essence, a basic principle, an element. Basically, tattas are reality, actuality, truth, and absolute truth. Thoughts as words or images in our brain are tatta as reality. A thought or an idea of a table is reality, and a table as an actual thing is actuality. Psychological things such as feelings, sensations of affection, care, anger, greed, itching etc. are tattas or tatta as actuality. Meditation or intelligence is a tatta as truth. However, siddhas hardly ever talk about tatta as supreme intelligence or absolute truth. Seeking confirmation through reasoning on the fundamental questions of life is still a part of time and sorrow, so remaining open, patiently, always and forever, is implied by the *alakh* sense. To feel, observe and go on emptying takes us deeper into life beyond the known, with the awakening of

insights.

A siddha or siddha yogi is one who is absolutely empty-minded, enlightened. A sādhaka is a disciple, a spiritual student, and sādhanā means discipline, the spiritual practice. A meditator is a disciple, that is, meditation is discipline. Siddha, Buddha, Bhagavān and such words are synonymous. Gorakhnath uses the word "joga" (yoga) in the sense of religion or dharma, and as we have seen, *joga* is described as *alakh vigyān*. Buddha uses dhamma in the same way, and describes it as *sanantano* or *sanātan*, that is, ever going, laws of nature by itself at all levels, eternal. [Furthermore, it is interesting to see that *sanantano* or *sanātan* and *bhagavān* are key words that have been regularly used by the Buddha and are scarcely found in the Vedas — the word *bhagavān* occurs once in the R̥gveda (10.60.12) in the sense of “benefiting” or “lucky”, and the word *sanātan* is said to occur once in the Atharvaveda which is the last Veda. However, traditionalists have adopted these words, and use them to propagate their tradition as being *sanātan*, when it is mainly *tantra-mantra* and desire-oriented for this and other worlds (*loka-paraloka āsa*).] Likewise, the word *bhagavān* is nothing to do with ideas of gods or God, as *bhagavān* is derived from *bhagga* + *vān*, that is, the burning of desire, and refers to such a human being. Whoever is a *bhagavān*, he or she is an *avadhūt*, an *arahat*. *Alakh nirañjan avadhū* is the key declaration of the Nath school; the words *nath*, *nirañjan*, *dhut* (*avadhū*), *yoga* are defined in the school of the Buddha, and are used in the same sense in the Nath school. *Alakh*, *nirañjan*, *avadhū* are not found in the Vedas; *nātha* is found in the Vedas but not in

the siddha or buddha sense of being a master of oneself and the emptying of the self. The Vedas do not speak of freedom from the known of ideas and ideologies, nor of observation of what is, emptiness and emptying of the consciousness.

Nirañjana is composed of *ni-* + *rañjana*, or *nir-* + *añjana*, or *ni-* + *rañja*. *Ni-* or *nir-* = no, not, un-, without, and *rañjana* = colour, colouring, entertaining, *añjana* = taint, dirt, and *rañja* = pain, sorrow. Attention is *nirañjana* energy, which is the awakening of *bodhi* from nowhere on its own, and emptying of our consciousness, that is, the ending of sorrow.

Avadhū is a key yogic term, composed of *ava* + *dhū*. *Ava* comes from *avaśya*, which means essential, needed, and also unrestrained, uncontrolled. Both these meanings pertain to *avadhū*. *Dhū* stands for cleansing or emptying. *Avadhū* and *avadhūt* are related, but have different senses. An *avadhū* is a seeker or an insightful meditator, who goes on emptying in the fire of observation, while an *avadhūt* is one whose consciousness is absolutely emptied. Thus, an *avadhūt* is an *arahat*, a nirvanic person.

We may distinguish two kinds of knowledge:

1. Mundane knowledge such as language, farming, science, trading, arts etc.
2. Psychological knowledge of feelings of “I”ness, attachment, greed, fear, affection, envy, sympathy, worry, anger, compassion, or other sensations and feelings (*bhāvapavanā*).

Mundane knowledge is not a problem in itself, we need it; and it always has to be updated. However, psychological knowledge is unrestrained; it has its own movement in flux.

It governs our every mental, vocal and physical action, and is capable of maintaining and multiplying itself, it is what we are. Enquiry and insight into becoming and the ending of this psychological knowledge, insight into fire of observation and the ending of the I centre and its periphery, is what is needed. *Dhū* stands for this cleansing or emptying. *Avadhū* also means a meditator, one who meditates, lives emptiness. It is the last word of the famous declaration of siddhas, which is *Alakh Nirañjan Avadhū!*

The *alakh* sense is the basis of all this, which is to know the place and limit of the seen, the known, and is thus freedom from the seen, the known. It is to remain with the unknown, to live in youthfulness (*bālā*), consciously.

Thus we have the wonderful, spiritual aphorism *alakh nirañjan avadhū* (often shortened to *alakh nirañjan* or to *alakh*) which is regularly used by monks of the Nath and Samnyāsī traditions as a greeting or invocation. Alakh or alakh sense means to know the limit of the known, its place in day-to-day living, and thus freedom from the known is the alakh sense. Thus, attention to “what is”, is the actuality of it, it is emptiness. The phrase *āge āge Gorakh jāge* is commonly found in the same traditions. Here the word Gorakh refers not to any particular person or siddha but to intelligence (i.e. meditation). The sense of the phrase is thus: “May intelligence remain awake” or “Let us keep intelligence awake”. “Nath” literally means a master. Actually, meditation is the mastery, and there is no master, for meditation is the ending of time, the ending of ego accumulation. That is, being a Nath is not an ego matter, it

implies meditation and virtue. In the words of the Buddha and Gorakh:

attā hi attano nātho, attā hi attano gati
attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho paro siyā
attanā hi sudantena, nātham labhati dullabham

You really are your own master,
you are responsible for where you are going.
You really are your own master,
who else could be your master?
Work rightly hard on yourself,
and find the mastery so hard to find.

— Buddha.

mana muṇḍā kai rūpa na rekha
jagatagurū mana hī mana dekha
ulaṭaigā mana tava mana kū gahaigā
kācapalaṭī kañcana hoyā rahaigā

Being ascetic the mind has no form or boundary.
Look for the world teacher within yourself.
As the mind is reversed it grasps the mind,
a glass transformed turns into and stays gold. (276)

— Gorakh.

Ūrdhvaretaś: *ūrdhvā* means upward and *retas* literally means sexual fluids, but essentially *retas* means energy. Thus *ūrdhvaretaś* means the upward flow of energy or the preservation of semen. It indicates that a man or woman in meditation is emptying every feeling, including those to do

with sex. Then, whether a meditator has physical sex or not is irrelevant. Meditation does not depend on the sexual act. With regard to the preservation of semen while making love or in dreams, understand that it is transmuted or transformed at the sensational level.³⁹

³⁹ bajarī karantā amarī rākhai, amarī karantā bāī,
bhoga karantā je byanda rākhai, te gorakha kā gurabhāī. (141)

While doing vajari, he maintains amari,
while doing amari, he maintains attention,
while making love, he withdraws semen,
he is Gorakh's guru-brother.

Bajarī or *vajarī* means “very hard”. *Amarī* is from *amara* “immortal”. Is *amarī* the suspension of time, or the ending of time? *Samādhi* is suspension of time, meditation is the ending of time. The word *bāī* or *vāyu* in Sabadis usually has the sense of attention, meditation.

This Sabadi speaks of a body that has been mastered by yogic practices and meditation. With regard to *vajarī*, *amarī*, and the preservation of semen while making love or in dreams, understand that it is transmuted or transformed at the sensational level.

Turning the mind to sex and other sensations is what is meant by *vajarī*, *amarī*. Meditation is not opposed to sex; it is free of the differences of inner and outer, male and female, it is the opening of a dimension with awareness of sensations from both bodies in *vajarī*.

Vajarī is the physical aspect of practices that promote the upward flow of sensations, and the mental aspect, with attention, is *amarī*.

What effects this is yogic practices that help the upward movement of sensational energy, such as skillfully doing a set of practices, including *mūla bandha*, *uddiyāna bandha*, *naulī*, *agnisāra*, *kapālabhāti*, *bhastrikā*, *kumbhaka* etc. And, above all, meditation. Thus, observation of sensations in erotic dreams or in love making is *vajarī*, *amarī*. Meditation is observation of what is, of the stream of feelings and sensations, while awake, sitting, sleeping, and the emptying of that stream. Ideas about the physiology of semen are just mind games.

Pind literally means a body or a mass, whether animate or inanimate, and *brahmāṇḍ* means the universe. It is said that pind and brahmāṇḍ are essentially the same. In other words, brahmāṇḍ, the egg of Brahma, simply means the brain-mind, which is a representation of the world in condensed form. Attention, beholding, is the gathering, raising of the energy of the brain-mind. Brahmāṇḍ may also mean the universe.

Drṣṭā means observer, *drṣya* means observed and *darśan* means observation. A Nath monk is called a *darsanī jogī* (*darśani yogi*), that is, one dedicated to meditation. Insight into “the observer is the observed” is the crux of the matter; insight unfolds through observation of “what is” and its emptying. In other words, insight into the observation of “what is” and its emptying is itself insight into emptiness, the fundamental insight. Insight into emptiness is seeing that the “I”, “ego” centre and its periphery, which it holds onto with desire, attraction or repulsion, is made up of thought, thinking, layers and layers of sensations and feelings — insight into emptiness shatters all this baggage. When this flame of insight is living, it affects life itself, and thus many varied insights will arise. *Śūnya* means emptiness. It is important to understand what Gorakhnath says about the words *pavan*, *bindu*, *agani* or *agni*, *sabad* or *śabda*, *bhoga*, *joga* or *yoga*, *sunya* or *śūnya* and *darasan* or *darśan*. *Śūnya* (emptiness) and *darśan* (observation) are the same; they are yoga. However, *pavan*, *bindu* and *agni* can either be *bhoga* or *yoga*. *Bhoga* means to give in to desire, with either attraction or repulsion. Reacting with desire towards *pavan*, i.e. sensations and feelings, is *bhoga*, but observing *pavan* is *yoga*. *Bindu* as concentration of thought, including slowed

down or suspended thought, time spent in samādhi or unmana, is bhoga, which can be a very refined bhoga, while bindu as focus of attention onto “what is” (*āsati* or *asti*) is yoga. Agni, i.e. fire, as desire is bhoga, and as the fire of attention is yoga. Sometimes Gorakhnath uses the expression *brahma agni*, meaning divine fire, i.e. the fire of attention. He also uses yoga as an all-inclusive term for religion, dharma. *Sabad* (or *Śabda*) means word, sound; as sound, sensation and vibration are inseparable, these are different aspects of the same thing. Fundamentally, the universal phenomena of name and form are vibrations, the actual, the “what is”. In the observation of “what is”, there is the awakening of intelligence from beyond on its own, and you gain insight. Intelligence absorbs, transforms vibrations into intelligence, and is therefore a regeneration.

Triloka, the three worlds, are understood as the world of thought-desire, the world of the body-mind of which thought-desire is a part, and the world as manifesting as a whole, of which thought-desire and body-mind are parts. These three are inseparable, and are temporal, they exist in time. This is what is (*āchai*). You (*piṇḍ*) are the world (*brahmāṇḍ*), a part of the world, and the world is in you. The emptying of the *piṇḍ*, in the fire of observation, with the awakening of *śunya* or emptiness, is the transformation and ending of you and the worlds or *lokas*.

Kanda literally means a bulb, and is said to be the potential source of 72,000 or many many nādīs. Basically, nādī means a sensation, and kanda is the potential source from which sensations, the movement of life, arise and into which they pass from moment to moment. Every being is a

representative of the whole; that is, the whole of the phenomenal universe (the brahmānd) of name and form, the intellect field, is encased in the body-mind complex in the form of sensations, which through meditation are transformed into intelligence; in other words, the evolution of every being is the evolution of the cosmos. The word cosmos (*viśva*) implies everything — intellect, intelligence and Supreme Intelligence. The position of the kanda in the human body is traditionally said to be in the stomach below the navel and above the genitals, shaped like a bird's egg. It may be thought that the statement "The evolution of a being is the evolution of the cosmos" is paradoxical, because the cosmos, that is, supreme intelligence, cannot be said to evolve. When we are in the condition where we are governed by thought and desire, that is, on the level of intellect, we cannot know intelligence; there is no contact with this plane. However, the state of intelligence does have a relationship with intellect, and that relationship is one of compassion and love. There is no need to speculate about whether there is any permanent entity within ourselves, such as *ātmā*, self or soul. (*pantha calantā ātamā marai* "the soul is weary from wandering". — Gorakh, in sabadi 212.) However, thought, being an inferior kind of intelligence, separates itself from cosmic existence and projects, ideologies and fantasies about the cosmos, about supreme intelligence. Basically, individual life, i.e. individual awareness, is a part of cosmic awareness and in the flame of attention, which is the totality of individual awareness, we perceive the deepening and evolving of awareness itself. Everything is awareness, but there are grades of awareness — material awareness, thought

awareness, attention awareness and supreme awareness. Basically matter and thought are the same — changing transient energy; and attention is silent energy.

There is a striking consistency in the four key milestones of the spiritual path indicated by Buddha, Gorakh Nath and Jiddu Krishnamurti. In their own words these are:

Buddha – *sotāpanna, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi* and *arahat*

Gorakh – *ārambh, ghat, paracay* and *nispatī*

Krishnamurti – *beginning, “I”ness, “is”ness* and *beyond*

In this regard, Gorakh and Krishnamurti are very much the same even in wording. Sotāpanna, ārambh and beginning are literally the same. Ghat and “I”ness are also similar. While describing “is”ness, Krishnamurti says that there is no ignorance and no sorrow, while paracay literally means knowing. And arahat, nispatī and beyond simply mean *nirvāna*.

Surajnath believes that *Gorakh Bānī*, *Śrī Gorakh Gutkā* and *Goraksha Śatakam* are among the authentic works of Gorakhnath and the Nath Panth, although they do seem to contain interpolations. *Goraksha Śatakam*, a text of roughly a hundred verses, describes yoga practices the world knows. However, the real spirit and spiritual guidance of Gorakhnath is found in his sabadīs or verses, which are parts of *Gorakh Bānī* and *Śrī Gorakh Gutkā*, and in which Gorakhnath speaks of the scope and limitation of various yogic and contemplation practices, and also of the clear-cut way of observation, darśan, i.e. meditation. For this reason, Sūrajnath has chosen a few of these sabadīs or verses as footnotes throughout this text.

Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath were born in the same way as you and I were, they pursued the spiritual path and became the greatest of masters. However, conventionally religious ideologues have defiled their teachings by propagating absurd things about their births, just as they have done with the Buddha, claiming he was an incarnation of Vishnu, or that the Vedānta genius Śankarācārya was born of a donkey – all rubbish – and unfortunately some of that has entered the Nath Panth too. However, freedom to enquire and intelligence, that is meditation, can see and discern all that we need to live spiritually and keep that alive.

XVI – YOGIC KRIYĀS

The term *yoga* or, more specifically, *haṭha yoga*, refers to yogic practices such as *kriyās*, *āsanas*, *prāṇāyāmas*, *bandhas* and *mudrās*. Yoga also means coming together, the union of two or more things — the word *haṭha* is made up of *ha* (meaning positive energy, craving or *pingalā*) + *ṭha* (meaning negative energy, aversion or *idā*). Thus the real meaning of *haṭha* yoga is the absorption of *ha* and *tha* into attention, from which we can see that the word *yoga* has religious and spiritual significance. Attention is silent energy, zero energy (or *sushumna*). Energy (*śakti*) and intelligence (*cetanā*) are one and the same.

From here on Surajnath describes various aspects of yogic practices (such as *kriyās*, *āsanas*, *prāṇāyāma* etc.), and physical exercise. This book is primarily concerned with spiritual practices and meditation, so it is not so important to do all these practices in your daily routine, for, needless to say, meditation does not depend on yogic practices etc. It is not necessary to master all the yogic practices, and some of them are interrelated, so that when you master one, the others come automatically or easily. For your routine practice choose a set of poses such as the M4 table (see the following chapter), or a separate *prāṇāyāma/kumbhaka* or a judicious combination of different poses. As an alternative, practise a set of physical exercises. Broadly we can say that there are two kinds of body culture, yogic exercise and physical exercise. In physical exercise there are many schools of thought and accordingly different physical exercises. It is an enormous field.

It is possible to learn and develop some skill in various yogic practices or in physical exercises such as skipping etc. from a book, but in the beginning personal guidance from a master is best.

Cleansing Kriyās:

There are two aspects of cleansing: body cleansing, which includes cleaning one's clothing and surroundings, and mind cleansing. Of course, mind cleansing is the most important and it is what we should do all the time, through meditation. However, physical cleansing is also important, and yogis have given good guidance in this regard. Kriyā literally means doing. Yogic kriyās are hygienic practices, and give freshness, lightness and health, but you do not have to make all the yogic kriyās part of your daily routine. Our overall health depends on many things and so we should be aware of our body. The ancient yoga masters say that those who are fat, and those who have excessive mucus, should practise yogic kriyās, but that people of normal health do not need to practise them, apart from normal cleansing. Practise some of the kriyās every day in the morning. One thing to be understood about kriyās is that they should be practised and finished in a short time. They are not to be maintained or practised for a long time as are other yogic practices. Even when they are repeated, this is in rapid succession for a short time, although without undue haste. Apart from physical cleansing, kriyās are also considered by yogis to strengthen the functioning of various organs and sharpen our sensitivity to the body-mind complex, and hence kriyās imply meditation. Practise kriyās in privacy. Remain steadily aware of sensations or feelings and sensations while

practising kriyās. The kriyās are *dhauti*, *basti*, *neti*, *nauli*, *trātaka* and *kapālabhātti*.

Stomach Dhautis

These involve inducing vomiting, and should be practised in the morning on an empty stomach. Mix a little salt in lukewarm water and drink as much as you can. Stand, bend forward and tickle the back of the throat to induce the vomiting reflex. Do this again and again to induce repeated vomiting and expelling water. However, vomiting on its own may not expel all the water. For this, pass a rubber tube into the stomach through the mouth, keeping the other end outside, and the remaining water in the stomach will come out through the tube. Use a soft, flexible and strong rubber tube one centimetre in diameter and one metre long. It is a good idea to make one or two extra holes near the end that is passed into the stomach, as these will help in case the hole is blocked due to materials in the stomach. Initially, the tube will not be easily accepted into the oesophagus and stomach, but it will go if pushed gently. There may be a further vomiting reflex while pushing the tube in or even after the end has entered the stomach. Dhauti practised with the help of a rubber tube is called *danda dhauti*. *Gheranda Samhitā*, which is also a standard traditional text on yoga practices, along with *Gorakshaśatakam* and *Hathayogapradīpikā*, gives a different description of danda dhauti. It says one should insert the stalk of the plantain, turmeric or cane into the oesophagus, move it up and down and then gently pull it out, so as to clean the gullet. However, rubber is best for danda dhauti, being safe and durable.

It is possible to induce the vomiting reflex at will with sustained practice. There is no need to practise the vomiting dhauti daily. Producing the vomiting reflex easily without tickling the throat, and then vomiting the water forcibly and continuously is called *gajakaranī dhauti*. *Gaja* means elephant and *gajakaranī* means acting like an elephant. And the capacity to vomit food taken into the stomach is called *vyāghrī dhauti*. *Vyāghrī* means tigress — animals of the cat family have this ability naturally.

There is a variety of dhauti called *vastra dhauti* (cloth dhauti), in which a thin, smooth, strong cloth, particularly one made of silk, about five centimetres wide and six metres long is used. The rolled-up cloth is placed in a pot containing water and it is swallowed bit by bit until about fifty centimetres remain outside the mouth. Then the *nauli kriyā* is done, i.e. isolating and manipulating the abdominal muscles (see below), and immediately after that the cloth is gently pulled out. Cloth dhauti should be completed within twenty minutes. It is practised after vomiting dhauti in the morning, but should be done no more than once a month. Sometimes the rubber tube or cloth gets stuck in the œsophagus while pulling it out—in that case one should pause and simply observe the feelings and sensations and then pull it out. To start with, you may not be able to swallow the cloth, so in that case do not practise nauli, and pull out any cloth that has been swallowed. Dhauti may be practised without nauli. Initially, some people may find a lot of muck on the cloth when pulling it out. On completing danda dhauti or cloth dhauti, clean the rubber tube or cloth thoroughly for reuse.

Vahnisāra Dhauti

Vahni means fire and *sāra* means essence. This dhauti is related to the lower stomach which is said to be the heat or fire centre. Stand with the knees and waist slightly bent, and the palms lightly pressing the thighs. Exhale completely and without breathing in, push the lower abdomen, i.e. the area of the abdomen below the navel, in and out repeatedly till you feel you need to take a breath. This is one round and you may practise three to ten such rounds. The abdomen above the navel and the chest are kept firm, though some movement may be felt there. This practice increases the gastric heat and so improves the digestion. It can also be done in a sitting meditation pose, but it should be practised on an empty stomach in the morning. Some rounds of vahnisāra dhauti can be done before *prāṇāyāma*, and three to five rounds can also be done after physical exercise. *Vahnisāra dhauti* is also called *agnisāra dhauti*: both mean the same.

Neti

Neti is a process for cleaning the nasal region. There are two kinds: thread neti and water neti. Thread neti is done with a thick thread, which is inserted into a nostril, pushed through till it emerges from the inner opening in the upper part of the mouth cavity. The thread is gently pulled back and forth five to ten times with both hands. The thread may be coated with soft wax to make it smooth — however, it is better to use a rubber catheter instead of thick thread.

Water neti is practised with lukewarm water with a little salt or honey, sugar, milk etc. added. A pot with a spout is required. Turn the face to one side so that it is parallel with

the ground and insert the spout into the upper nostril and pour the water into it — the water will come out through the other nostril. Then do the same on the other side. Water can also be sucked in through alternate nostrils or both nostrils and then expelled through the mouth. After completing water neti, blow air forcibly through the nostrils to expel any remaining water. You may also practise *kapālabhāti* (see below) for two to five minutes after doing water neti.

Nauli

Nauli involves isolating and rotating the front abdominal muscles. These muscles lie parallel in the stomach, with the naval situated in the centre. To practise nauli, stand, bending slightly at the knees and waist. Then exhale completely, hold the breath out and practise *uddiyāna bandha* (stomach lock), and immediately press both palms firmly on each thigh in order to isolate each muscle. Pressing both palms at once will isolate both the muscles simultaneously, which is called central nauli, or you can isolate the left muscle by pressing the left hand on the left thigh and the right muscle by pressing the right hand on the right thigh, alternately one after another, and these are called left nauli and right nauli respectively. The final phase of nauli lies in moving the muscles from left to right and right to left by changing the pressure on the thighs. This is known as *nauli-cālan*, “nauli rotating”. Nauli can also be practised in the squatting pose (*utkata āsana*). Nauli is a difficult practice and it may take some days’ or even months’ sustained effort to master it. It should be practised on an empty stomach in the morning. It gives deep and correct exercise to all the abdominal viscera and organs. It has a purgative effect. Practise three to ten

rounds of nauli each time you hold the breath and do four to ten rounds every day, with equal rounds of rotating from left to right and right to left. Practise nauli after completing the āsanas or before practising prāṇāyāma.

Basti

Basti is the process of cleansing the colon, and involves sucking in, moving and flushing out water. Water is sucked into the colon through the anus with the aid of a wooden tube inserted into the anus. For this, practise nauli kriyā in the squatting position in water or by keeping the outer end of the tube in water. Obtain a smooth wooden or plastic tube some fifteen centimetres long and two centimetres in diameter. Half the tube is inserted into the anus and half kept out. Then practise nauli and its manipulation while squatting in water. Central nauli causes water to be sucked in, nauli manipulation cleans the colon, and then the water is flushed out by the normal process of evacuation. This may be repeated three to five times on an empty stomach in the morning. Practise basti once or more a month.

Trātak

Trātak means a staring gaze without moving the eyelids. It is done by looking at a small object at a moderate distance such as a spot, pebble, flame or a coloured spot, or a distant object such as a mountain peak or star, with a staring gaze until the eyes water. It should be done for two to five minutes a day. Psychic energy is fixed on the object of trātak. When the eyes water, close them and remain focusing mentally on the trātak object for some time, or remain steadily aware of feelings and sensations.

Kapālabhāti

Literally *kapāla* means skull and *bhāti* means to make shine, to inflame by repeatedly fanning with air. Kapālabhāti is a rapid but rhythmic breathing exercise in which exhalation is forced with repeated contractions of the lower stomach, and inhalation is passive. This breathing exercise is like the bellows of a blacksmith. After every 20 to 40 rounds of kapālabhāti, i.e. forced breaths like a bellows, stop a while and take two or three deep breaths; this can be called a kind of kapālabhāti round. The prānāyāma practice known as *bhastrikā* comprises the kapālabhāti kriyā followed by normal prānāyāma, which is equivalent to one round of bhastrikā. Bhastrikā literally means bellows. You may do as many rounds as you wish, up to 5 or 10 minutes. Initially the contractions may be quite abrupt, but with practice they should become firm but smooth. Kapālabhāti can be practised in any seated meditation pose, but the lotus pose (*padma āsana*) and the thunderbolt pose (*vajra āsana*) are the best. Anus lock (*mūla bandha*) is maintained throughout the practice. Attention is focused on the sensations at the top of the skull. Kapālabhāti is done rapidly, with 60 to 140 exhalations per minute. The trunk and neck are kept straight and still, though there will be slight movements in the upper abdomen, ribs and chest. The hands may be placed on the knees in the *jñāna mudrā* (see Chapter XVII) or resting on the knees with the palms up, or any way that feels comfortable. Alternatively, the hands may make rhythmic up and down movements. That is, the upper arms are at the side of the body, elbows bent, hands with fists clenched at shoulder level. As you breathe in raise the arms straight

above the head with the palms open. Then with the out breath vigorously bring the arms, elbows and hands down to the starting position, as if you are pumping out the air, as the breath is expelled with the forceful contractions of the lower stomach. Practise kapālabhāti or bhastrikā for about five minutes a day, before going on to prānāyāma. Kapālabhāti and bhastrikā are rejuvenating and make the mind calm.

Kapāl-chakra Kriyā

Surajnath describes here another yogic kriyā, which may be called as “Kapāl-chakra kriyā”. This is a yogic kriyā consisting of *kapālbhāti* and *chakra shvasan* (cyclical breathing) with meditation. It is an excellent yoga routine, containing *kapālbhāti* rounds with kumbhakas for about 10 minutes, then breathing cycles for about 10 minutes, with no breaks in between. It comprises four steps, as follows:

1. Warming up. (a) Light physical exercise with, say, 3 to 5 steps from side to side, back and forth rhythmic walking for about 15 to 20 minutes, while meditating, that is, observing the breathing or the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, plus any sensations in the body.

Or (b) Practising a yoga sequence, such as *sarvāṅga āsana* (whole body pose) 1 to 5 minutes, *matsya āsana* (fish pose) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes, *hala āsana* (plough pose) 1 to 3 minutes, *bhujanga āsana* (cobra pose) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 minute, *dhanura āsana* (bow pose) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 minute, *naukā āsana* (boat pose) 1 to 3 minutes, *pashchimottāna āsana* (posterior stretching pose) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 minute, *ardhamatsyendra āsana* (left and right) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 minute each, *tola āsana* (weighing pose) $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes.

Keep meditating, observing sensations closely and calmly. You will be naturally more awake to things happening in the body and around about you, in nature. That is fine. Focus mostly on what is happening in the body.

Then, immediately after warming up –

2. Kapālbhāti with kumbhakas. Sit in a meditation āsana. Practise 50 to 100 rounds of kapālbhāti strokes and then immediately inhale fully, hold the breath (*dāma kāū gahibā* “hold the breath” – Gorakh, Sabadi 51.) as long as you can comfortably, and then exhale slowly. Again immediately start the next round of kapālbhāti and holding the breath. Continue these rounds for about 10 to 12 minutes with eyes closed. Keep meditating, that is, closely observing breathing or the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip plus sensations in the body. Once in position, keep the arms and legs stable. And immediately after this, keeping the eyes closed –

3. Chakra shvāsan (cyclical breathing). In the same meditation āsana, immediately start to breathe 20 to 30 rounds of slow and deep breathing in and out, 40 to 50 rounds of medium fast breathing in and out, and 40 to 50 rounds of fast breathing in and out, in continuous succession. This is one round of cyclic breathing. Practise 3 such rounds of cyclical breathing continuously, with no break in between, with the eyes closed invariably, and meditating, for about 10 to 12 minutes.

4. Rest and meditation. Immediately after cyclical breathing, still with the eyes closed, may be sitting or lying with ease, keep meditating, that is, observing any sensations or

sensations-feelings in the body, with the awareness of natural breathing or of the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip. Practise all this in privacy, on an empty or nearly empty stomach, in the morning or evening. This serves as an excellent physical exercise; it bestows good health, and may remove various kinds of physical sicknesses and/or mental health problems. This is because this Kapāl-chakra Kriyā suddenly stirs your consciousness, so that any sensations from within may come up to the surface; and in the fire of observation these get emptied. Basically, the movement of our consciousness, which is what we are, is nothing but sensations. And needless to say, observation of “what is”, which is meditation, should continue throughout our normal waking hours, whether we are standing, sitting or lying, and does not depend on this kriyā or any other exercise.

For physical fitness, you may do any kind of exercise that you prefer – even then, it is worthwhile practising the Kapāl-chakrā Kriyā regularly as it is of great benefit to one’s consciousness. If you are sick, be aware of what your body tells you for doing this exercise.

Meditation is the heart of all this – understanding, insight through observation of “what is” and its emptying. Furthermore, note that you should not mix in any mantras or ideas of gods and goddesses and so on in this. Keep it simple and free of any traditions, beliefs, ideologies, conventional religions. The way is the alakh sense, siddhas tell us, that is, the sense of the presence of the mind that the Buddha lives with.

Gorakhnath, the pioneer of yoga, advises us in his *sabadiṣ* (verses or sayings) in Hindi to change the body (*kāyā-palat*) twice or three times a year, by a period of fasting, or with the use of Ayurvedic medicines such as those of lead, tin, herbs, in a special preparation, and also speaks of the importance of *kumbhaka* (*prāṇāyāma*) in maintaining our health.

XVII – YOGA TABLE “M4”

Along with steady awareness, a healthy body and sharp sensitivity are most important, so here Surajnath would like to present a small set of yogic practices which incorporate the benefits of āsanas, kriyās, prānāyāma, bandhas, mudrās and vedha, and bestow a healthy body and a sensitive mind. The set consists primarily of *mahā mudrā*, *matsyendra āsana*, *brahma mudra* and *mahā vedha*, and is called “M4” simply because the letter “m” occurs in the four practices. The student may practise $10 + 10 = 20$ rounds of *mahā mudrā*, $1 + 1 = 2$ rounds of *matsyendra āsana*, 1 round of *brahma mudra* and 4 rounds of *mahā vedha*. This ratio of $20 + 2 + 1 + 4$ will suit the average student. Those seriously practising may increase the number of *mahā mudrā* to up to 40 a day, while other students may increase them to 24 to 30 a day. There is no need to increase the numbers of *matsyendra āsana* and *brahma mudrā* even when the number of *mahā mudrās* is increased.

The table should be practised on an empty stomach in the morning. It can be practised in the evening also, but the morning is better. Preferably, you should be alone and quiet in the place chosen for practice, but nevertheless collective practice can also be beneficial. The room or place should be clean, ventilated and free from insects. Wear a minimum of loose fitting clothing while practising yoga. There should be no constriction anywhere on the body, such as at the sex organs, waist or chest. Warm up gently by walking, some light jogging, slowly rotating the ankles with the legs stretched out three to five times in each direction, slowly

rotating the waist while standing, moving the shoulders up and down three to five times, then with the fingers on the shoulders slowly rotate them three to five times from front to back and back to front. Then do some of the stretches and pressures on the neck that are advised in the treatment of spondelosis. Finally, do some three to five rounds of kapālabhāti with 20 to 50 breaths in each round, and then gently move on to the practice of M4. After completing the M4 table lie down for śava āsana (see Chapter XX) for about ten minutes. While changing from one pose or practice to another, stop a little, take one or two deep breaths, and then move on. Remain meditating throughout the practice.

Mahā Mudrā

Literally *mahā* means “great” and *mudrā* means “seal of authority”. Etymologically, *mud* + *rā* = *mudrā*, meaning “giving joy”. Bodily gestures and facial expressions are also called mudrās. In yoga, mudrā can also mean an arrangement of physical organs that is held or repeated for a longer time, with steady meditative awareness. Mudrās are advanced yoga practices, some of which are easy and some complex and difficult; many incorporate not only āsanas but also prānāyāma and bandhas. The effect of yoga is both physical and mental: the effect of mudrās is more specifically mental.

This mudrā is called mahā mudrā because of its great efficacy in the awakening and deepening of attention to sensations throughout the body. Physically the essence of yoga practices lies in correct technique, but mentally it lies in meditation, that is, in attention to sensations or feelings and sensations

Mahā mudrā comprises four yogic practices — partial *siddha āsana*, partial *paścimottāna āsana*, *prānāyāma* and three bandhas. The three bandhas are *mūla bandha*, *uddiyāna bandha* and *jālandhara bandha*. The practice of mahā mudrā can be broken down into four steps. Sit on the floor or flat ground on a blanket or rug that should be thick but not soft, with both legs together, stretched straight in front and hands resting on the ground near the hips. Straighten both arms so that the spine is slightly lifted and stretched, and from here proceed to the first step.

The first step is partial siddha āsana. Fold the right leg at the knee and press the heel lightly against the perineum. In order to get the perineum clear for this purpose, a man should first hold up his genitals with one hand, and then set the heel in the centre of the perineum, that is between the anus and genitals. The folded leg rests on the ground at approximately a ninety-degree angle.

Next comes the second step, partial paścimottāna āsana. Full paścimottāna āsana is done by stretching both the legs straight out in front close to one other, grasping the big toes with each hand (beginners may grasp the foot near the ankle), and bending over so that the forehead touches the knees. However, mahā mudrā uses only a partial paścimottāna āsana. The second step thus consists in grasping the foot of the extended left leg below the toes with both hands linked together. For this make a finger lock by interweaving the fingers of the two hands. Do not bend the head further towards the knee. The extended leg is kept straight, and care should be taken to see that the knee does

not lift from the ground, otherwise the stretch in the leg and other parts of body is reduced and the effect of mahā mudrā is weakened. Many students may initially find it difficult because of a lack of flexibility in the muscles and joints, in which case the extended leg may be grasped near the ankle or even higher up near the knee. Progress will come with patient practice. When with regular practice the hands can be stretched beyond the extended foot, grasp the foot in the finger lock. Flexibility will surely come with regular practice.

With the second step complete, comes the third, which is prāṇāyāma. Prāṇāyāma is extending and regulating the time of inhaling, retaining the inhaled air in the lungs, and exhaling. In prāṇāyāma the time ratio is important. This can be 1:1:2, that is, say, four seconds for inhalation, four seconds for retaining the inhaled air and eight seconds for exhaling. The ratio can be varied: 1:2:2 or 1:3:2 or 1:4:2, but in all these ratios the ratio between inhalation and exhalation is constant, 1:2, while the period of retention may differ with ability and practice. The ratio can be gradually and carefully expanded. The ratio 1:2:2 is perfectly adequate. Small variations in the ratio are fine, but what is important is attention to feelings and sensations. Mahā mudrā prāṇāyāma is more strenuous than ordinary prāṇāyāma. Inhale smoothly through both the nostrils, or through the nostril that is naturally open, with a contraction of the glottis and then after full inhalation close the glottis in order to maintain kumbhaka. Kumbhaka means retention of air. Closing the glottis or glottis lock (*prāna bandha*) is an integral part of holding the breath either inside or outside. As you bend over

your leg and grasp your foot, the abdominal muscles are considerably contracted, and care should be taken not to let them relax, although a little protrusion is unavoidable.

The fourth part of mahā mudrā comes immediately after full inhalation and closure of the glottis, namely applying the three bandhas and maintaining kumbhaka. The three bandhas are mūla bandha (anal lock), uddiyāna bandha (stomach lock) and jālandhara bandha (chin lock). Mūla bandha is simply contraction of the anal sphincters and slightly tightening the anus. When applying mūla bandha any intestinal gas should be allowed to pass.

Normally, uddiyāna bandha (stomach lock) requires after full exhalation a simulated inhalation with expansion and raising of the ribs, chest and diaphragm with the glottis closed. *Uddiyāna* literally means flight—so in uddiyāna bandha we have the flight of the diaphragm. Uddiyāna bandha is secured by three actions: the neck and shoulders are kept firm, there is strong simulated inhalation with closed glottis, and the lungs are kept nearly empty with the ribs and chest raised and expanded so that the diaphragm moves upward into the chest cavity, and the abdominal muscles are kept relaxed. The abdomen looks concave. Hold uddiyāna bandha until you have to inhale. It can be practised standing or in any meditative pose. While standing the legs and knees are kept slightly apart, the knees and waist are slightly bent, and the hands rest loosely on the thighs.

However, in mahā mudrā, uddiyāna bandha is maintained after a complete inhalation while bent over the extended leg grasping the foot, and the abdominal muscles may remain

contracted for various anatomical and physiological reasons. This is the difference between normal uddiyāna bandha and uddiyāna bandha in mahā mudrā.

For the third, jālandhara bandha (chin lock), bend the neck and lower the chin close to the jugular notch or a little lower on the chest bone.

Thus in the fourth step of mahā mudrā, immediately after complete inhalation, the glottis lock (prāna bandha) and jālandhara bandha are applied and immediately after this the mūla bandha and uddiyāna bandha are applied.

Raise the shoulders slightly. Mahā mudrā is thus maintained.

So we see that mahā mudrā requires four things. First, pressing the heel against the perineum, second grasping the foot of the extended leg, third maintaining kumbhaka, that is holding inhaled air in the lungs, and fourth the simultaneous practice of bandhas (locks). The whole technique of mahā mudrā could be expressed briefly and clearly as: mahā mudrā is prānāyāma practised with three bandhas in partial paścimottāna āsana combined with partial siddha āsana.

Retracing the steps of mahā mudrā in reverse order, first uddiyāna and mūla bandhas are relaxed together, then jālandhara bandha and then prāna bandha are relaxed. Otherwise the first three bandhas can be relaxed together (or jālandhara bandha can be maintained without release throughout the successive rounds), and immediately afterwards, the fourth bandha is released. The breath is allowed to pass out smoothly, along with the necessary contraction of the glottis, through both nostrils or through the

nostril that is naturally open, taking twice the amount of time taken for inhalation. Mahā mudrā can be practised without uddiyāna bandha and the kumbhaka phase of prānāyāma. It may even be practised with jālandhara bandha only, and with the pūraka-recaka (inhalation-exhalation) phase of prānāyāma at a 1:2 ratio.

One round of prānāyāma constitutes one round of mahā mudrā. It is best to do successive rounds of mahā mudrā without a break, but to start with you may take a rest after every round, and may even release the hold on the foot. However, it is best to keep hold of the foot and do successive rounds of prānāyāma without interrupting them with normal breathing.

Devote half your energy to practice on the left side and the other half to practice on the right, with an equal number on both sides. In left-side practice place the right heel against the perineum with the left leg straightened, and in right-side practice the left heel is against the perineum and the right leg straightened. If twenty rounds of mahā mudrā are to be done, do ten on the left side and ten on the right.

With practice of the kumbhaka (retention of air in the lungs) phase of prānāyāma, mahā mudrā becomes very effective and the student becomes sensitive and healthy but some may feel physically rather delicate. If this is so, omit the kumbhaka phase of prānāyāma and practise mahā mudrā with only the pūraka (inhalation) and recaka (exhalation) phases with a 1:2 ratio. This will still give all the benefits, namely sensitivity, health and physical strength.

Both men and women can practise mahā mudrā and other yogic practices. Women practising yoga extensively may find some change or irregularity in their periods in the beginning, but this is nothing to be worried about. However, take medical advice if the condition appears to be serious.

While practising mahā mudrā, the eyes should be closed. This is a help in meditation, although it does not mean that one cannot or should not meditate with the eyes open. You can do either, depending on the situation you are in. Yogic practices are the systematic holding of pressures, stretches, contractions, poses etc., but it is the aspect of mind, that is, *attention to the physical sensations or subsequently to the feelings or mental sensations as they may arise that is the most important*. Without awareness of this meditative aspect, yogic practices may either bestow acrobatic ability or be positively harmful.

Matsyendra Āsana

Matsyendra āsana is the second practice of Table M4. The origin of yoga lies far in the remote past, but a complete and systematic presentation of yoga practices such as kriyā, āsana, prānāyāma, bandha, mudrā were given to the world by Yogi Matsyendranath and his disciple Yogi Gorakhnath.

It is possible that this difficult āsana was first discovered by Yogi Matsyendranath, hence its name. It is of great spiritual and physical value. To practise it, sit on the ground with legs stretched out in front close to each other. Then bend the right knee and folding it upon the thigh place the heel firmly against the navel region and foot in the left groin. Then swing the left leg around and place the left foot on the ground

to the right of the right knee. Then follows the second step, the twisting of the spinal column that is the main point of matsyendra āsana. The upright knee, here the left, is now used as a fulcrum against which the upper back portion of the right arm or the back portion of the right shoulder joint rests. This is done by passing the right hand to the left of the left knee and rotating the whole trunk to the left until the right shoulder and left knee are pressing against each other. In order to obtain the twist, rotate the trunk fully and prevent the knee slipping off the shoulder, the right hand is fully stretched out and grasps the left foot near the toes. Care should be taken not to overstrain the elbow joint, as that can be injurious to the bones in the elbow. This danger is completely avoided by setting the right shoulder firmly against the left knee.

Then pass the left hand behind the back and try to get hold of the right thigh near the groin or hold onto the folded right leg just above the ankle. Thus there are two forces operating on both upper corners of the trunk, twisting it to the left, and these two together are enough to effect the fullest possible twist. However this twist does not affect the neck vertebrae, so turn the head to the left until the chin is almost in a line with the left shoulder. In maintaining matsyendra āsana in the final stage, be careful to keep the trunk and chest pulled upright so that they do not droop down. Maintain this pose for 30 to 60 seconds or a little more. The pulse of a normal healthy human being is approximately 60 to 80 beats per minute, and so a general idea about time ratio can be gained in the beginning by noting the pulse; with regular practice, time can be sensed without any aid.

Some students may feel a little constipated from the forward bend in mahā mudra — in that case they should maintain matsyendra āsana a little longer; and conversely if the bowel motion is a little loose, maintain matsyendra āsana for a shorter time. Be sensitive to the body's innate wisdom. Matsyendra āsana is very effective in treating constipation. In daily practice you can do many rounds of mahā mudrā on both sides, but do only two rounds of matsyendra āsana, that is once to the left and once to the right. Throughout the practice, be attentive to feelings and sensations. Keep breathing normally.

Matsyendra āsana is difficult and initially hardly anyone can do it. Therefore start with half matsyendra āsana. The only difference between matsyendra and half matsyendra āsana is that the heel is placed under the thigh against the perineum or by the side of the opposite hip instead of against the navel region, with the foot in the opposite groin. Thus, the folded right leg including the foot rests on the ground. Half matsyendra āsana gives most of the benefits of the full matsyendra āsana. Some students may never manage to achieve matsyendra āsana because of their body structure etc., but they need not worry; they can continue with half matsyendra āsana, which is quite good enough. If it is difficult to manage even half matsyendra āsana in the beginning, practise it with the forward arm and hand gradually coming closer to the foot. With regular practice the body becomes more flexible. It can be difficult to move from half matsyendra āsana to full matsyendra āsana, but gradual progress can be made every day by putting the heel against the navel and the foot in the groin and raising, folding,

positioning the other leg until it eventually reaches the required position for matsyendra āsana.⁴⁰

Brahma Mudrā

Brahma mudrā is the third practice of Table M4. This can be practised in any of the meditative sitting poses, but padma āsana (the lotus pose) is said to be the best. For padma āsana sit with the legs stretched out in front; place the ankle and foot of one leg on the opposite thigh with the heel against the groin and the foot turned slightly upward, and then place the other leg on its opposite thigh in the same manner. Both the heels are close to the lower abdomen. Brahma mudrā itself is simple to practise, but it is very effective on the neck and spine, and also the face, head and shoulders. Slowly turn the head towards the left shoulder, hold it there for two to three minutes, and then slowly turn it back to the original position. Then the same to the right, hold it and turn it back. Bend the head down keeping the chin close to the jugular notch or a little further down the chest bone for two to three minutes. This is exactly like jālandhara bandha (chin lock). Move the head slowly up to its original position. Finally bend the head slowly backwards, hold it for two to three minutes, and slowly bring it back to the original position.

While practising brahma mudrā, do not move the shoulders, keep the waist and back erect, and let the hands rest easily on the knees or in front. When the head is bent backward,

⁴⁰ Shri B.K.S. Iyengar's Light on Yoga describes two postures that would be of great help in progressing from half matsyendra āsana to full matsyendra āsana. They are: ardha matsyendra āsana II and ardha matsyendra āsana III.

the upper and lower teeth are kept together so that the lower jaw and throat muscles are correctly stretched. Brahma mudrā takes six to ten minutes. Keep breathing normally. Basically all physical and mental movements are sensations. Mahā mudrā and brahma mudrā are both very effective in creating calmness and a peaceful state of mind.

Mahā mudrā contains aspects of paścimottāna āsana, and so, accordingly, you can also use Table M4 as a basis and then add some other āsanas, such as those in the general yoga table (Chapter XX). In that case the place of Table M4 in the general yoga table is at the point of paścimottāna āsana and ardhamatsyendra āsana. If you incorporate, say, śalabha āsana, bhujanga āsana, nauka āsana, pavanmukta āsana etc. before M4, then kapālabhāti should be practised immediately before mahā mudrā. Brahma mudrā can be practised at the end; i.e. if you add, say, parvata āsana after M4, then brahma mudrā can be practised before or after that.

Mahā Vedha

After brahma mudrā, you may practise *mahā vedha*. Mahā vedha is done by taking a deep breath, holding it, applying jālandhara bandha and mūla bandha, and pressing the palms on the ground, raising the buttocks, then letting them gently strike the floor repeatedly while holding the breath. Do two to ten rounds like this. Vedha literally means to penetrate or to observe penetratingly; mahā vedha is of great help in keeping you alert to what is happening in the body-mind complex. While making any changes you should be aware of what your body tells you.

Do not be in a hurry to change from one pose to another; stop for a moment, be aware of the body, take one or two deep breaths and then move on to the next practice. Sometimes, perhaps because of some mistake in the practice, but perhaps for some other reason, there may be some kind of pain somewhere in the body after practice. If that happens, observe the painful sensations very closely, and this will certainly relieve the pain.

The student of yoga should avoid strenuous work, arduous journeys, bad company, fasting and overeating. Avoid also heating the body with direct fire, overindulgence in sex, or any activities that give trouble to the body, as Gorakhnath advises us. *Gorakṣaśatakam*, *Amṛtasiddhi*, *Hṛ̥ṭha Pradīpikā*, *Gheranda Samhitā* are the classic authoritative texts on yoga practices; Surajnath or indeed any yogi is indebted to them for the practices they reveal.

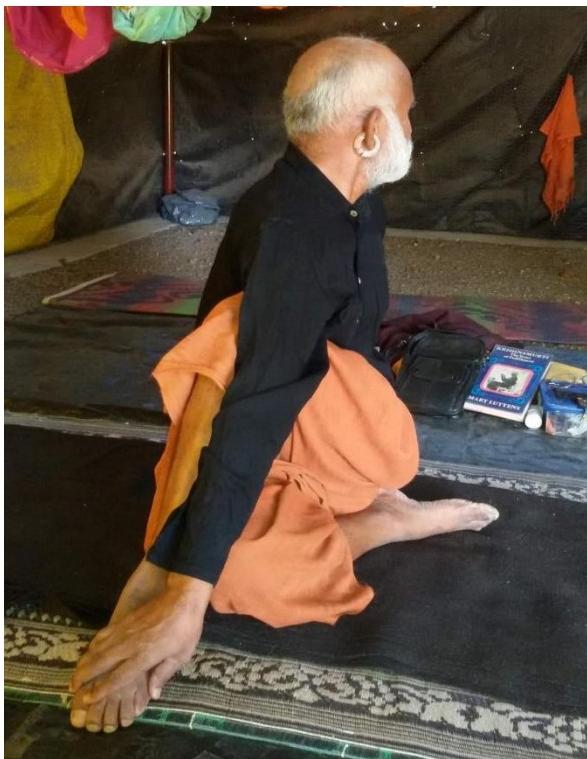
The student of Yoga Table M4 and prāṇāyāma may initially feel some pain in the chest and along the sides of the spinal column even in normal breathing, but this is nothing to worry about. The pain comes from the changing pattern in the muscles etc. and also from sharpened sensitivity. Meditate on this, observing the physical sensations and feelings. The table gives a type of correct yogic exercise for all the organs of the body, the muscles, nerves, circulation, heart, lungs, abdomen, various glands and deeper delicate organs. It has great therapeutic value and can keep diseases away. This does not mean that one will never fall sick, for that depends on many other things, but the possibility of being sick is very much minimised. However, sometimes you may have to

suspend the practice for some time, in case of fever etc. Therapy is not the subject matter of this book; rather it is spiritual understanding and meditation.

Everybody needs food, shelter and clothing, and these should be taken care of. A yoga student should be very careful about eating the right food — and the right food is simple food. Grains such as wheat, rice and millet, pulses, vegetables, vegetable oils, salad, milk and milk products, butter, fruit in season, unrefined sugar and honey are good. Excessively bitter, salty, sweet food should be avoided. Again, be sensitive to the body's innate wisdom. What must be avoided is every kind of addiction or intoxicant such as tobacco, alcohol or drugs. It is good to remain vegetarian. We are not pronouncing any dogma but we should not fall prey to our taste buds. Plants and animals are living beings and in every being there is the intrinsic passion to live, to grow, to know. We should take the least sensitive beings for food so that the violence is minimised. Students of yoga should neither fast nor overeat — in fact, anyone on the path of spiritual cultivation, whether practising yoga or not, should eat only a light and easily digestible meal in the evening. This is essential for serious meditation practice throughout the night, whether one is awake or asleep.



Surajnath in Mahā mudrā



Surajnath in Ardha Matsyendra āsana

XVIII – MEDITATION ĀSANAS

Let us consider some of the āsanas (poses) that may be used for meditation. Students of yoga and other physical practices will naturally use the seated meditation poses, but anyone else can use them as well. A well-mastered seated meditation pose is balanced and graceful.

Siddha Āsana (master pose or accomplished pose)

Literally siddha means “enlightened, an adept, a master human being”. The term siddha also means something that is fully accomplished. *Siddha yogis* speak of siddha āsana as the best meditation pose, which is also said to be the best for the practice of prāṇāyāma and bandhas. Āsana means both body pose and also the low flat seat or platform on which one sits or lies down. To assume siddha āsana, sit on a seat, which may be a blanket, carpet etc., stretching both legs out in front. Then bend the left leg at the knee and place the heel with a slight pressure against the perineum with the right hand, holding up the genitals with the left. The sole of the left foot touches the right thigh, with its lower edge on the ground. Then fold the right leg at the knee and place the heel against the pubic bone just above the sex organ. The male sex organs should be adjusted so as to avoid undue pressure on them. The right sole is against the left thigh, with its lower edge and toes in between the left thigh and calf muscles. If there is not enough space for the genitals in between, the testicles may be lodged there and the penis made to lie outside the folded leg. Both folded legs should rest comfortably on the ground. The body weight rests on both the buttocks equally, with a slight pressure from the left heel.

on the perineum. Rest the hands on or near the knees, palms facing upwards or hold them in front with fingers clasped or any way that feels comfortable. Otherwise, the hands may rest on the knees in what is called the *jñāna mudrā* (*jñāna* literally means “knowledge”), in which the tips of the thumb and index finger are placed together, and the other fingers are kept straight, palms facing upwards. This mudrā is said to be suited to the practice of *prānāyāma*. Keep the waist, back and neck, that is, the whole of the spinal column, naturally erect. The head may sometimes be bent forward as in the *jālandhara bandha* or chin lock. The eyes may be closed or open, according to the situation. Siddha āsana can be practised by both sexes. Instead of the left leg and heel, you may practise this pose with the right leg and heel, with the appropriate changes. Breathe easily and naturally.

The pose can be held for hours together, say one to three hours continuously or even more, despite pains and tensions, but you may take breaks. No harm will come to any of the body organs, muscles or nerves. This is true of the other meditation poses such as *svastika āsana* and *padma āsana*, since in seated meditation poses there is no neuro-muscular discoordination. However, in the case of siddha āsana we should note that there is no need to press the heel very hard against the perineum — just a little pressure is sufficient. Though the meditation āsanas are of help to meditators, meditation is free of any formalisation. While yogic practice is suited to meditation, without meditation it can also be of help, but that would be merely acrobatic. Yoga is psycho-physical. However, the really serious meditator can stay lying in bed awake and meditating. (And meditation will also

enter into sleep automatically when we meditate very seriously while awake.) We are not being dogmatic here — simply what we say can be of help for developing right understanding, which is the basic need, and right understanding also implies food, physical health, livelihood and so on. We should meditate seriously for at least one to two hours a day, either sitting in a meditation pose or not.

The body should be balanced and steady while sitting in a meditation pose. *Śava āsana* (corpse pose) can also be used without harm. However, the body must not be forced to remain fixed in other poses for a long time as this can cause harm to the nerves or muscles from neuro-muscular uncoordination. In other poses, and even in sleep, and lying in bed, be aware of the body's wisdom and make the necessary adjustments. While the body should be steady in a meditation pose, sometimes strong tremors may well up, or tensions occur, quite naturally, making the body shake or become tense. Whatever tensions, tremors, pain, pleasure or any other kind of sensation or feeling you may experience, just keep meditating, steadily observing all feelings and sensations. It is good to meditate with the eyes closed because then the other senses become sharper. However, we need to be aware of the situation we are in, and accordingly we may meditate with the eyes open or closed. To meditate, to observe feelings and sensations steadily does not mean that one should not get rid of any biting insects. Meditation is intelligence and not a dogma.

Padma Āsana (lotus pose)

Padma literally means “lotus flower”. To assume this pose sit in a flat place with both legs stretched out in front. Bend the right leg at the knee and place the foot on the opposite thigh, with the heel at the root of the thigh close to the lower part of the stomach with the sole turned upward. Fold the other leg in the same way, placing the foot on the opposite thigh. The genitals rest on the ground below the cross of the legs. Adjust both heels so that they are almost pressing the lower stomach above the pubic bone. Place the hands on the knees or comfortably in front. Keep the waist and back erect. The neck may be either erect or lowered to assume the *jālandhara bandha* (chin lock). Keep the eyes closed. This pose may be practised with or without the *mūla bandha* (anus lock).

Svastika Āsana (auspicious pose)

This refers to the fylfot, the mysterious geometrical symbol treated as auspicious which is called *svastika*. To assume svastika āsana sit in a flat place stretching both legs out in front. Bend one leg at the knee and place its heel at the opposite groin with the foot resting on the ground and somewhat upturned and the sole touching the thigh. Bend the other leg and place its heel at the other groin above the first leg, with the sole touching the opposite thigh. The toes of both the feet are inserted comfortably between the thigh and calf muscles of the opposite legs respectively. The genitals rest on the ground. Adjust the ankles one above the other so that they are comfortable. Rest the hands on the knees or in front. As with before, the eyes are usually kept closed, though they may also be open. Keep the waist and back erect,

while the neck may be erect or in the jālandhara bandha. This is an easy and comfortable meditation pose.

Yoga texts describe some other meditation poses such as *bhadra āsana* (gentle pose), *vajra āsana* (thunderbolt pose) and *gomukha āsana* (cow face pose). Initially it may be very difficult to sit even for thirty minutes because of severe pain, but as the mental impressions are emptied you will be able to sit for more and more time. However, this does not mean that someone who can sit in a meditation pose for a long time has eliminated many mental impressions, for a contortionist or an acrobat can also sit for a long time.

Generally the lips should be closed, and the tongue should lightly touch the alveolar ridge just behind the upper teeth. Sometimes meditators may find their mouth fill with saliva, in which case they should swallow it. These meditation poses can be practised by both sexes — in other words any normal human being can do them.

The practice of meditation while lying down, or when going to sleep, is also recommended. Further, for those who initially find the sitting postures difficult, meditating while lying down is very effective — in fact all people, advanced or beginners, young or old, sick or healthy, will gain all the benefits of meditation thereby. Thus, when lying down to sleep, all you need do is primarily to observe attentively the sensation in the centre of the upper lip and then observe feelings or vice versa. You can do this lying either on your back or on your side. And while meditating, let sleep come on its own, naturally and easily. In this way, meditation will enter your sleep and even your dreams. And as during sleep

the surface layers of your consciousness are comparatively quiet, the deeper layers will then come to the surface and they will be emptied in the flame of meditation. This does not necessarily mean that in sleep you know your sleep as sleep or your dreams as dreams in the same way that you know when you are awake, though sometimes this may occur. However, what is important is that you feel the meditation and its effects, that the mental impressions are being eradicated. Once meditation has entered sleep it will continue automatically throughout the hours of sleep, so that when you wake up you notice that you come to normal awareness with the meditation still continuing.

Similarly, you can do your regular daily meditation while lying down. Surajnath has spent very many hours meditating in this fashion, eating one meal and half a meal every day for several years. Beginners may find that they fall sleep doing this, but they should simply let that happen. Again, what is important is how diligently they are observing feelings. Further, students will certainly find that solitude and leisure are very helpful for the serious, deep and penetrating work of meditation.

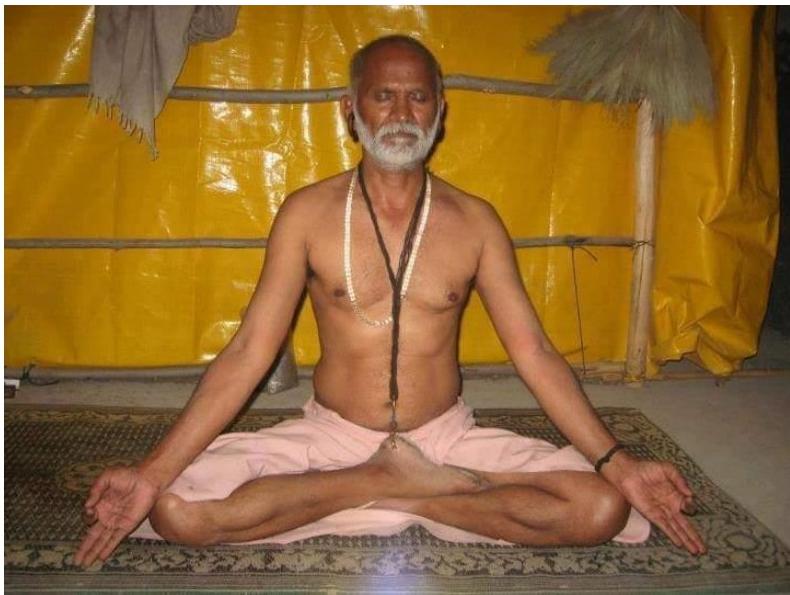
It is a hard truth to digest when we are just being intellectual that the intelligence (*prajñā*) that empties our mental impressions becomes focused only when we steadily attend to feelings or sensations, and otherwise not. To meditate does not mean imitating some saintly calm face. To meditate is to observe “what is” from moment to moment, to observe

steadily feelings and sensations.⁴¹ To understand the psyche or any material thing is to understand feelings and sensations. The whole body-mind complex, muscles, bones, glands etc., is burdened with mental impressions, and the most delicate and sensitive organs such as the brain and heart are the most heavily burdened. The strong hold of locked psychic energy is easily perceived when awareness is focused on the bony part of the nose or the top of the head — it is a kind of burning or some intense sensations. The movement of all the mind, i.e. body, brain and heart, is one unitary movement. They are all related. When meditating we shall perceive psycho-physical tensions and sensations throughout the body, that they can be centred here or there with repercussions in the body, in the face. The meditator becomes sensitive to what happens throughout the body-mind complex during meditation, namely the arising and ending of mental impressions. Sometimes the ending of mental impressions may be felt as a breaking or exploding, usually experienced in the head, and sometimes as a dissolving or stroking in the neck, heart, stomach or elsewhere in the body. Physically, tensions occur mainly

⁴¹ āsatī chai ho pīndatā nāsatī nāhī, anabhai hoyā paratīti nirantaramāhī, gyāna khoji ame bigyāna pāyā, sati sati bhāṣanta sidha sati nātha rāyā. (201)

O pandits, what is is the way, not not is.
 Non-stop practice, wake up, be fearless –
 searching for knowledge we found pure knowledge.
 It's true, it's true, says Siddha Sat Nath Ray.

around the lower part of the neck, where the neck, shoulders and back meet. They move into the head, and emotionally they appear in the face. Psycho-physical tensions or sensations can be pleasant or painful. The head, the lower neck and the heart or the abdomen contain the major concentrations of mental impressions. *The body is the replica of the movement of the mind.*



Surajnath in Siddha āsana

XIX – PRĀNĀYĀMA

The word *prānāyāma* is made up of *prāna* + *āyāma*. In yoga we have two words, *prāna* and *cetanā*. Literally *prāna* means energy and *cetanā* means awareness. The movement of both individual life and cosmic life is the movement of energy and awareness. In fact, energy and awareness are the same — they are intelligence. Cosmic life is absolute order, but, as we know, there is disorder in individual life. Unsteady awareness is disorder and steady awareness is order. When entangled with subjective time, i.e. with past and future wandering thoughts, awareness becomes non-attention, disorder. However, we can say that unsteady awareness is a part of the cosmic order, unsteady awareness affects the movement of individual life, which in itself is a kind of order, so as a whole there is no contradiction.

Prānāyāma is like a two-edged weapon and its wrong use can be harmful. However, when using the correct technique and with steady awareness of feelings and sensations, *prānāyāma* is safe and good. *Prānāyāma* is a simple practice. Yogic practices in general, and particularly *prānāyāma*, are of great help in developing a healthy body, very fine sensitivity and evenness of mind. The word sensitivity means perception through the senses, so that we experience sensations. There are six sense organs, for the intellect, the thinking part of the mind, is also a sense organ. The mind is the united mechanism of the sense organs, which are all related and all affect each other. It is one unitary movement in which the thinking part of the mind mechanism is mostly predominant. Furthermore, there is the meditation capacity of the mind

mechanism in which all the senses (i.e. the sense organs) are awake and observing, and this is a fundamentally different activity, which the brain perceives. This too is a kind of sensitivity or intelligence using the brain.

In prānāyāma, prāna means respiration and āyāma means span, range. Prānāyāma includes three aspects of breathing, namely inhalation (pūraka), retention of the inhaled air in the lungs (kumbhaka) and exhalation (recaka), and the time taken for each of these three will vary. Varying the time for inhalation, retention and exhalation is a mechanical matter, and is the best prānāyāma technique. There are other supportive and necessary aspects of prānāyāma technique, which are a meditative sitting pose, anus lock (mūla bandha), stomach lock (uddiyāna bandha) and chin lock (jālandhara bandha).

The standard ratio of prānāyāma inhalation, retention and exhalation is 1:4:2, for example, four seconds for inhalation, sixteen seconds for retention of the inhaled air and eight seconds for exhalation. All three phases of prānāyāma respiration are done steadily and rhythmically. Prānāyāma is thus the voluntary interception of the natural flow of the breathing. Although 1:4:2 is described as the standard or ideal ratio, it is best to start off with 1:2, 1:1:2, 1:2:2, 1:3:2 and lastly 1:4:2 gradually, patiently and very carefully. Thus, a beginner should drop the kumbhaka phase (retention) and practise inhalation and exhalation only, with the ratio of 1:2. Use the pulse initially to fix the timing of each phase. Slight changes in time do not matter. However, stop using any such means to fix the time ratio as soon as possible, and fix it

mentally without using the pulse, counting, reciting words etc. The technical correctness of prāṇāyāma is fine, but steady awareness of sensations and feelings is what is most important. Without meditation prāṇāyāma can be harmful and with meditation it is safe. While practising prāṇāyāma, as also while sitting meditating, you may feel various sensations welling up and coursing through the body, sometimes quite powerfully. Remain steadily aware of these, or simply of the sensation at the centre of the upper lip along with any other sensations. You may practise prāṇāyāma for 30 minutes or more every day, and the serious student may practise for up to one hour a day or a little more.

After complete controlled prāṇāyāma the inhaled air is held in the lungs with glottis lock. Apply the anus and stomach locks at the same time, followed by the chin lock, so that the breath is held (i.e. in kumbhaka) for as long as it can be done comfortably. At the end of kumbhaka, release the chin lock and immediately after that the glottis and stomach locks. The anus lock may be maintained comfortably. Exhalation is controlled and takes twice as long as inhalation. The chin lock may however be maintained throughout all the rounds of prāṇāyāma. Maintain the anus and stomach locks without undue strain during kumbhaka. One inhalation, retention and exhalation constitutes one round of prāṇāyāma. The rounds of prāṇāyāma should be practised one after the other, but in the beginning you may take a little rest between rounds.

Inhalation is complete when the lungs are full and exhalation when the lungs are nearly empty. Do not lose control over the lungs during inhalation and exhalation. The expansion

and relaxation of the chest as you breathe in and out should be slow and uniformly progressive to the end. Keep the glottis partially closed so that the resulting frictional sound is low and uniform. The lower abdominal muscles along with other muscles of the trunk play an important role in inhalation and exhalation in both normal breathing and in prāṇāyāma breathing. In normal breathing, abdominal breathing is said to be the standard, in which it is mainly the lower abdominal muscles that are involved in respiration along with other trunk muscles. In prāṇāyāma breathing, all the trunk muscles, that is, abdomen, chest and back, are activated to their full capacity. Thus, in prāṇāyāma exhalation the abdominal muscles contract even after the chest shrinks to its lowest size to expel the inhaled air. Prāṇāyāma inhalation and exhalation is complete but there should be no undue strain on the body. However, if prāṇāyāma inhalation and kumbhaka are pushed beyond the correct proportion, beyond the capacity of the organism, lung damage can occur, and unduly forced exhalation can possibly affect the heart. Take care to ensure that the proportion of inhalation, retention and exhalation that is established can be done comfortably throughout all the rounds of a session. Prāṇāyāma is not meant to suffocate the body — it is disciplined training. If stomach or intestinal gas needs to pass out while practising, it should be allowed to do so.

Do your yogic practices in solitude. Yogic practices involve a static and steady rhythm, whereas physical exercises are dynamic. A serious yoga student should avoid strenuous work, long walks, excessive sex, direct heating before a fire,

and fasting, and must be very careful about food and habits. Thus, after the morning prānāyāma practice it is advisable to take a little milk with a teaspoonful of butter or ghee added. This serves as a lubricant to the body, which is essential for the student of prānāyāma. The best time to practise is in the morning, on an empty stomach. The room should be empty, clean, ventilated and free from insects etc. Keep the eyes closed and the hands resting on the knees or comfortably in front. Be regular and punctual but avoid rigid adherence to principles. Inhalation and exhalation is through the nostrils, either through both or whichever nostril is naturally open. Nature takes care to open or close the nostrils alternately or sometimes both the nostrils may be open. In normal prānāyāma there is no need to control the nostrils, but there are variations of prānāyāma in which the nostrils are manipulated, as described below. While inhaling, allow the stomach, chest, ribs, shoulders and back to expand naturally, and while exhaling, let them contract naturally, remaining steadily aware of sensations. Sensations in the stomach, heart, chest, neck, back and head are related to deep, strong feelings, which are the essence of sensations.

There are variations of prānāyāma involving manipulations of the left and right nostrils in inhalation and exhalation, or using the mouth, lips, teeth and tongue in inhalation, or producing prolonged sounds as in “Om” and *bhrāmarī* during exhalation, or using the glottis in *ujjāyī prānāyāma* to produce a low unuttered frictional sound during inhalation and exhalation. *Ujjāyī* is another prānāyāma practice that is done either with or without kumbhaka. Prānāyāma inhalation through the right nostril and exhalation through

the left is said to produce heat, and inhalation through the left and exhalation through the right is said to produce coolness.

For the manipulation of nostrils alternately, use either hand, folding the index and middle fingers to the palm so that the thumb is used for one nostril and the ring and little fingers together for the other. Do not rest the fingers not being used on the nose. This arrangement of fingers is the convention, but they can be used differently.

The left nostril and left side of the body is negative, feminine energy (*idā nādī*), and the right nostril and right side of the body is positive, masculine energy (*pingalā nādī*). Positive and negative energy are interrelated. The body is so divided into positivity and negativity, but deep down every cell and every organ contains both aspects. Positivity or negativity have no existence without the opposite. The intellect — matter and mind — moves through the momentum of positivity and negativity. Basically, every sensation arises and passes with tremendous speed. Arising is positive energy and passing is negative energy. Psychologically, craving is positive and aversion is negative energy, as a result of which there is recording, and attention is a higher kind of energy, in which both positivity and negativity are absorbed.

Prānāyāma may be practised with the tongue rounded and protruding between the teeth and lips and sucking air in through the narrow passage formed by the tongue, or by placing the tip and edges of tongue close behind the lower and upper teeth, allowing a small passage for sucking in the air which makes a slight hissing sound as it passes through.

These two practices are said to be cooling. Possibly the cool sensation experienced helps to cool down the body. Practise some rounds of this cooling prāṇāyāma during hot weather. It may be done in any position, sitting comfortably, standing, lying supine or in a meditation pose. Cooling prāṇāyāmas are said to be capable of bestowing a healthy and attractive body. Avoid this practice during the cold season. In cooling prāṇāyāmas, inhalation is through the mouth but exhalation is always through the nose. Different prāṇāyāmas produce different vibrations and hence can bestow different results.

For *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* the traditional authoritative text, *Hathayogapradīpikā*, advises one to inhale forcefully making the sound of a male bumblebee (a *bhramar* is a bumblebee) and exhale slowly making the sound of a female bumblebee. The mouth is kept closed while breathing in and out. Despite the traditional view that bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma bestows a special happiness or that “Om” gives a deep strong sound, no fancy ideas or philosophy should be attached to these sounds — just be steadily aware of feelings and sensations.

When breathing, the serious student of prāṇāyāma or the serious meditator may sometimes naturally experience very slow breathing, or even the suspension of breathing for short periods. This natural suspension of breathing is called natural kumbhaka (*kevala kumbhaka*). The word kumbhaka is frequently used as synonymous with prāṇāyāma. This is because the kumbhaka phase is more important than pūraka (inhalation) and recaka (exhalation). Even if you do not practise kumbhaka (retention), simply hold the breath a little

after inhaling, perhaps apply the bandhas, and then exhale. When you have fully exhaled, also hold the breath outside a little, before inhaling again. Prāṇāyāma can be practised on its own or immediately following a set of yogic poses. Practise kapālabhāti for about five minutes before going on to prāṇāyāma, and afterwards practise śava āsana for about ten minutes, more if needed.

The word *kumbhaka* comes from kumbha which literally means a water pot, a jar. Thus kumbhaka means holding water or air or that which holds water or air. In yoga, kumbhaka generally means holding fully inhaled air to one's capacity, without undue strain on the body. In and out breaths are prolonged, with the out breath more prolonged than the in breath. You may take a few normal breaths after each kumbhaka round, so that you return to normal breathing, and then, exhaling fully, start a new round of kumbhaka, i.e. inhale slowly, hold the air according to your capacity, and then exhale more slowly than the inhalation — the ratio may vary, as described earlier in this chapter. This is one round of kumbhaka, and you can take four or five normal breaths after each round so you return to normal breathing, and then start the next round, or you may practise kumbhaka rounds one after the other without a break between them, being aware of your body's wisdom. Thus you may practise kumbhaka rounds for about a half to one hour. Practise kumbhaka in siddha āsana or in any meditation āsana, sitting easily and erect on an empty or nearly empty stomach in the morning or evening, or both, alone and uninterrupted. While sitting you may practise some bandhas, while any other variations or technical details

of prāṇāyāma can be ignored; thus you may practise mūla bandha with ease while holding the inhaled air in kumbhaka, and then relax it while exhaling. This helps awaken and push energy upwards. Yoga is skill in action, which develops not only from skill in thought but also from observation and intelligence.

You may incorporate this kumbhaka into the yoga table M4, in the rounds of matsyendra or half matsyendra āsana, mahāmudrā etc., while in the peak phase of each posture. Above all, throughout this practice the aspect of meditation is very important, which is simply to observe sensations or feelings or breathing movements within the body, possibly using some surati such as the sensation in the centre of the upper lip or any sounds from inside or outside. Observe bodily sensations or facial expressions — in the way you like to observe or as your body demands — closely and diligently throughout the sitting. The kumbhaka will bestow health and sensitivity, and also calmness. For any spiritual seeker it will surely help to speed up the unfolding of insight into meditation or the deepening of insight into the matters of mind and life; maybe there will occur the inner nāda (anahada or anāhat sound), nūr (light), unmana (supra-consciousness), or some aspect of kundalinī (consciousness), all of which are basically sensations. However, the unfolding of insight into meditation, which is emptiness, is *the* fundamental thing, and it unfolds just through observation of “what is” (asti), of feelings and sensations, and it does not depend on inner nāda, nūr etc.; whether these occur or not does not matter. Observation is emptiness, it is the wholeness of living, it is all-powerful and insight into it shatters our

consciousness radically, and then the awakening or deepening of insight into the matters of mind and life is gradual through the emptying of the mind on its own.

For exploration into meditation and yoga practices, Surajnath is indebted to Gorakhnath and the spirit of many known and unknown siddhas. Matsyendranath and Gorakhnath are the greatest pioneers in the exploration of yoga practices, which are a small part of their spiritual exploration. In fact, Gorakhnath uses the word *joga* (*yoga*) as synonymous with religion, *din*, *dham*, *dhamma*, *dharma* and so on. What Surajnath or any yogi knows about yoga practices is their gift.⁴²

⁴² Haṭhavidyām hi matsyendragorakṣādyā vijānate, svātmārāmo’thavā
yogī jānīte tatprasādataḥ

Matsyendra, Goraksha, and others know well the science of Haṭha. By their grace, Svatmarama or any yogi knows it.

— Haṭhayogapradīpikā, Chapter 1, verse 4

XX – YOGIC AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES⁴³

General Yoga Table:

Here we give a brief outline of a set or table of yogic practices that the student may profitably follow.

Yogic Practice	Times in Minutes
1. <i>Sarvāṅga āsana</i> (Whole body pose)	1 to 5
2. <i>Matsya āsana</i> (Fish pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
3. <i>Hala āsana</i> (Plough pose)	1 to 3
4. <i>Bhujanga āsana</i> (Cobra pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
5. <i>Śalabha āsana</i> (Locust pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
6. <i>Dhanura āsana</i> (Bow pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
7. <i>Naukā āsana</i> (Boat pose)	1 to 3
8. <i>Pavanmukta āsana</i> (Freed air pose)	1 to 3
9. <i>Paścimottāna āsana</i> (Posterior stretching pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
10. <i>Ardhamatsyendra āsana</i> (Left and right) each	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1
11. <i>Ushtra āsana</i> (Camel pose)	1 to 2
12. <i>Supta vajra āsana</i> (Supine thunderbolt pose)	2 to 6
13. <i>Kukkuta āsana</i> (Cock pose) or <i>Tola āsana</i> (Weighing pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
or <i>Kāka āsana</i> (Crow pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
or <i>Mayūra āsana</i> (Peacock pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
14. <i>Ardhacandra āsana</i> (Half-moon pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
15. <i>Parvata āsana</i> (Mountain pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
16. <i>Tāda āsana</i> (Palm pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
17. <i>Vrksha āsana</i> (Tree pose)	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 2
18. <i>Uddiyāna bandha</i> (Stomach lock) after complete exhalation	2 to 4 rounds

19. <i>Kapālabhāti</i>	3 to 5 rounds
20. <i>Prānāyāma</i> (e.g. <i>ujjāyī</i> or some variation)	10 to 20 rounds
21. <i>Śava āsana</i> (Corpse pose)	10 to 30 minutes

Except for *uddiyāna* bandha, *kapālabhāti* and *prānāyāma*, all other practices are to be practised for one round each.

These are the supine, prone, sitting, balancing and standing poses. *Śava āsana* is the resting pose. When practising, keep to the order of poses given above — some poses may be omitted or others added, but in doing so pay heed to what the body says, to its innate wisdom. We need to understand the right and wrong combinations of the various poses. In the above table, *sarvāṅga āsana* and *matsya āsana* are counter poses to each other, as are *hala āsana* and *dhanura āsana*, whereas *bhujanga āsana* and *śalabha āsana* are complementary to *dhanura āsana*. *Paścimottāna āsana* and *ardhamatsyendra āsana* are counter poses, as are *ushtra āsana* and *supta vajra āsana*. *Mayūra*, *kukkuta*, *kāka* and *tola āsanas* are in principle the same, giving the same benefits to the body; they are balancing poses and any one of them may be practised. *Tāda āsana* and *vrksha āsana* are standing, stretching and balancing poses, which are best practised at the end of the *āsana* programme; likewise, *parvata āsana* is a sitting stretching pose. *Uddiyāna* bandha with complete exhalation gives the correct pressure changes and stretching to the outer and internal muscles and organs in the trunk. Practise *śava āsana* between *āsanas* for one or two minutes if you feel tired; a beginner may feel the need for this. Be careful to see that the table of yogic practices or physical

practices adopted is well-balanced and suits your body. While doing your yoga practice, do not be in a hurry. Stop a little after each posture, take one or two breaths and then move on to the next one. Makara āsana is another resting pose which can be used while practising prone postures. A little light warming up, such as walking or jogging, before practising the yoga table is recommended.

With regard to counter and complementary poses, the procedure is as follows. After sarvāṅga āsana, practise the counter pose, matsya āsana, so that there is a balancing of muscle tensions. After hala āsana, practise either dhanura āsana or bhujanga āsana plus śalabha āsana (or all three), as the latter two match the practice of dhanura āsana so much that they can be said to be complementary. Thus, you may practise all these groups or combinations or a selection of them, but try to maintain the sequence of postures indicated earlier.

Dedicated yoga teachers explore and present various effective and beneficial yogic sequences, containing different practices, and you may care to try some to see if they work for you. Likewise, the chapter on the M4 Table is simply to allow you to choose. Yogic practices are secular, but even some great yoga teachers may try to mingle them with their beliefs and ideologies. Intelligence, meditation, is not to accept or reject but to be with, i.e. to observe every feeling so completely that there is no recording but emptying. Yoga is good for health, but without insight into the intelligence, prajñā/bodhi, that empties our mental impressions it is of little significance. Further, meditation

does not depend on yoga. So, while doing yoga postures you should steadily be aware of your bodily sensations.

***Śava Āsana* (corpse pose)**

Literally, *śava* means a dead body. This is a simple pose, giving correct relaxation to all parts of the body. Lie down supine on a plain bed so that the head, back, hands and legs are resting on the bed. The legs are stretched out, with an angle of nearly 30 degrees between them. The toes point upwards, falling slightly outward. The arms lie straight at a little distance from the body, with the palms facing upwards and the fingers turned slightly inward. This is the physical aspect of *śava āsana*, but the mental aspect is very important. This is nothing other than meditation. Observe the sensations part by part throughout the body or the sensations in many parts of the body simultaneously, or your feelings in any changes of facial expression and the sensation in the centre of the upper lip etc. *Śava āsana* is an excellent yogic practice for giving rest and regeneration to the body. Because of its restful nature you may tend to go to sleep, but this should be checked, as you must remain steady, alert and awake all the time in this pose. *Śava āsana* can be maintained for a long time with no neuro-muscular harm. Normally it should be practised for 10 to 30 minutes, and before getting up do a few rounds of deep breathing. Roll over to either side, and use your hands to help you get up.

Physical Exercise

Our physical structure needs to be maintained correctly, for a body that is not properly maintained is an ugly self-created scar on nature. Physical and yogic exercises are quite different from each other. The serious student of yogic exercises cannot do hard physical work as his or her body is delicate and generally slim, but nevertheless quite healthy and very sensitive. However, as physical exercises are hard and tough, they develop a strong and muscular physique. There seems to be a basic difference in the chemistry of yogic and physical practices. However, students of physical exercise may practise mindfully some rounds of prāṇāyāma, but if they do they should then generally practise prāṇāyāma some time after physical exercise, and while doing so should be aware of the body's own wisdom. Prāṇāyāma is very effective in developing evenness of mind. Students of either yoga or physical exercise can be serious meditators, though it is said that yogic culture is more appropriate for meditation. A healthy body and a sensitive mind are needed for deep meditation. However, this does not mean that we cannot or should not meditate when we are ill. In that case, we should look after ourselves with rest, medication, food etc., and in that too remain seriously meditating. Physical health should be maintained by yogic or physical exercises or our daily work when it involves good physical exercise. There are circumstances when physical labour cannot take the place of correct physical exercise, and this is something we have to be aware of.

Physical exercises should be done preferably in the morning or if necessary in the evening but always on an empty or

nearly empty stomach. It is better to bathe before exercise rather than after. If you wish to bathe afterwards, then wait until the body temperature returns to normal. If sweat appears during practice, yogis advise us to rub it gently all over our body after yogic exercises, as it is held that some of the subtle benefit of the postures or *prāṇāyāma* can be washed away if we bathe immediately afterwards. It is a good idea to pass urine, even if it is not pressing, before bathing or exercising as it relaxes some physical tensions and you will approach your exercise or bath with more ease. There are various kinds of bath — a simple water bath, a bath with added herbs such as margosa (neem), a sun bath or cleaning the body with a dry or damp cloth. Sitting in the morning sun, walking slowly with bare feet on grass and pebbles or earth are beneficial. Exercise may be taken indoors or outside, but avoid it during the heat of the day, and when it is finished avoid exposure to draughts outside until the sweat has dried and the body temperature has returned to normal. Exercise wearing a minimum of loose clothing or something like a track suit if needed. Avoid talking while exercising. The gaze should be steady, but not rigid.

Do not eat immediately after exercise, but perhaps take some light refreshment after half an hour. Drink water, fruit juice etc. as required at any time, but only in small amounts while exercising if the need is felt. Do not indulge in drugs, alcohol or tobacco, because these are harmful to both body and mind. Eat moderately as the body requires, avoiding both overeating and undereating. In case of sickness, minimise or suspend taking exercise. When recovering from a serious

illness, we may take some very light exercise, such as slow walking and some gentle stretching, but it is best to have an expert's advice. We should make sure we get enough sleep as it is a psycho-physical need. In fact, we should not starve the body of sleep, food, water, air, shelter or any basic needs. Serious meditators will naturally feel the need for less sleep when they are at rest in bed. Do not be worried by this. The body will need sufficient rest in bed, but meditation is rest for the mind, whether you are awake or asleep. We should live and take exercise in healthy, clean surroundings, being sensitive towards our environment. Similarly, we should be disciplined and regular about exercise, but we should not become too rigid about it.

Good maintenance of the body is a scientific matter, so we should use common sense in understanding the body's innate intelligence and its needs. Body intelligence works properly when it has not been polluted by misuse. We should feel fresh and light after exercising — if we feel tired, dull and sore after exercising, then we should examine what we are doing for mistakes. We may initially feel sore from some of the exercises, but things will become normal. The need of pace and intensity varies for people of different ages. Physical exercise requires initial warming up, and this itself is exercise. There are many ways of warming up, such as brisk walking, running on the spot, jogging, *ātyāpātyā* etc. Start by taking exercise slowly and gradually build up the pace and intensity. Give at least 20 to 40 minutes a day to exercise. Many exercises, such as running, *ātyāpātyā*, tennis, swimming or the five Tibetan rejuvenation rites will serve as two in one, i.e. as both warming up and main exercise etc.,

but some exercises such as skipping do need prior body warming. Some, such as running, swimming and skipping, give balanced exercise to all parts of the body, whereas others stress a particular part. In that case generally do first the exercises relating to the legs, then the trunk and upper limbs and lastly the neck. There are various types of physical exercise, so you should choose carefully. It is good to have expert guidance from a competent master, but we should also use our own commonsense.

While exercising and afterwards, be constantly aware of all your sensations, physical movements and feelings. Only by observing these sensations and feelings can we come to understand the body's intelligence, what it says, what it demands. You may change from physical to yogic exercises or vice versa at any time, but both practices should not be done together. Prānāyāma in particular is a serious practice, so be very careful when practising it independently or practising the M4 yoga table. However, students of physical exercise can make excellent use of the meditation āsanas. If changing from one set of exercises to another, begin with a small amount of the new set and build up gradually, observing and becoming aware of the body's intelligence.

Both body and mind require the right training. Right training and learning are intelligence. Meditation implies training and learning. Life is movement in relationship and it is good to behave with ease and gentleness, though when needed we can be quite stern. While constantly observing feelings, we must also be observant of the situation we are in. The meditating mind is steadily aware of "what is" and is

therefore steadily aware of the changes taking place in the mind and in our situation. We can make mistakes, but admitting our mistakes is wisdom. It may not be possible to rectify some of our mistakes, or this may not always be what is wanted, but rectifying mistakes when possible and/or necessary is wisdom; and being careful and attentive so as not to commit mistakes is also wisdom. Wisdom is intelligence. We make mistakes because of ego, insensitivity and non-attention while talking, walking, moving, or working. As we become aware of our mistakes, we should remain steadily aware of the feelings therein so that mental impressions are eradicated and new ones not created.

Sensitivity, vigilance, suppleness and toughness are the qualities developed by physical exercises. A person may be a good or a competitive sportsman in the conventional sense, but we must still be watchful or mindful of greed, envy, competitiveness, fear, worry, anger, pleasure, pain and so on, so that these are not being impressed on the mind over and over again but are being eradicated. The recording of mental impressions is sorrow. A person who is continually eradicating them is evolving towards supreme intelligence, while he who is continually recording them remains immersed in the stream of sorrow. And the way to supreme intelligence or God, which is no way, not *going* anywhere, is righteousness, silent passion, meditation. We do not have to be always making an effort to be attentive, for this is tiring, but when we are aware of the need for attention, this very seriousness of intent works for us, so we find we are always returning to attention.

Let us look at a practical physical exercise. Skipping with a rope is one of the best physical exercises. It vibrates every cell of the body in a balanced way. With sufficient warming up, some 500 to 1000 rounds of skipping jumps is ample. If tired, you can take a very short break after every 100 to 200 rounds, but do not stop moving. Five different kinds of jump can be combined: normal spot skipping on both feet, skipping on the left foot, then on the right foot, skipping with spot running, skipping with running four steps forward and four steps backward, skipping on the spot but bending the knees gradually in four jumps and raising up in four jumps and straightening them again. However, you may just keep skipping normally or do some of the variations as they feel right. Skipping is a fast-pace exercise and you should skip for 100 to 150 rounds per minute. While skipping stay naturally erect and at each round make a minimum jump from the ground to let the rope pass under the feet from front to back. Jump on the toes with a rhythmical springing movement in the ankles and body. Keep the eyes steadily on the ground three to five metres in front. It may take up to a month to get the hang of skipping. Sometimes we may practise skipping without a rope, maintaining a similar rhythm. If you are combining physical exercises with skipping, skipping should come at the end, and then you may practise śava āsana.

Good physical or yogic exercise will help stop excessive nocturnal emissions and reduce addictions, diseases and weakness in general. We must be careful about what we eat and drink, about our environmental “food” (clean surroundings), our social “food” (our friends, associates,

reading etc.), and our thought “food” (what goes on in our minds). A healthy body knows its feeling of joy, which is shared with others in the movement of life.

⁴³ For yogic kriyās, āsanas, prānāyāma, bandhas, mudrās and other aspects Surajnath has drawn on the traditional texts, Haṭhayogapradīpikā and Gheranda Samhitā. English translations of both these texts are available. For the former, see Swami Svatmarama, The Haṭha Yoga Pradipika: the original Sanskrit by Svatmarama, an English translation by Brian Dana Akers, YogaVidya.com, Woodstock, N.Y., 2002; for the latter, see James Mallinson, The Gheranda Samhita: the original Sanskrit and an English translation, YogaVidya.com, Woodstock, N.Y., 2004. Surajnath has also used Goraksha Śatakam by Gorakhnath, a pioneering text describing various aspects of yoga. An English translation is given in an appendix to G.W. Briggs, Gorakhnāth and the Kānphata Yogīs, Motilal Banarsiādass, Delhi, 1973. Surajnath also studied Gorakhnath’s famous vernacular work Gorakh Bānī, edited by P.D. Barthwal, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, 1942, and Śrī Gorakh Gutkā, edited by Raj guru Yogi Candranath, Yogiśvar Math, P.O. Vitthal, Karnataka, 1975. He is also indebted to the advice in the English texts on āsana and prānāyāma by Swāmi Kuvalayānanda of Kaivalyadhām, Lonawla, and the journal Yoga Mīmāmsā, vol. V, no. 1, January 1934.

XXI – YOGI SURAJNATH: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Here follows a brief biography of Yogi Surajnath. He was born on 12th August 1956 at Ranjangaon, his mother's natal village (his school records, however, show he was born in 1957). His early life was spent in the nearby village of Rui-Chhatrapati, in Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra State. His father's name is Bhagwant Wābale, his mother's Babai Wābale. He has a younger brother, Ganpat Wābale, and a younger sister, Mahānandā. His name in the school records is Sītārām Wābale, but he was called Sūryabhān by his parents and childhood friends. He completed his early education at the village school and then did a B.A. at the New Arts and Commerce College, Ahmednagar.

Surajnath's family is a Marathi-speaking farmer's family. Initially it was hard for him to find employment, but in 1979 he joined the railway mail service department as a sorting assistant. The following year he joined the army postal service on deputation and worked as an army postal clerk and a field postmaster for nine-and-a-half years at various places in the eastern and northern parts of India. He held the rank of warrant officer. The typical sedentary lifestyle of a deskworker resulted in his becoming fat and pot-bellied, which displeased him. Fortunately, he received excellent guidance from a sportsman, Mr. Sudesh Chandra, and was able to regain good body tone. His last posting was in Ladakh in 1989-90 which he liked the most, although the high altitude had a side effect on his body, as a result of

which he could not have a daily bath for some years, and so would wash himself with a wet cloth. While in the army he visited many tourist sites, pilgrimage centres, remote villages, jungles, hills and mountains, and used to walk regularly 3 to 10 kilometres in the evenings and immediately afterwards practise 500 or more rounds in his room with a skipping rope. He kept up this practice even in Ladakh, after becoming acclimatized.

Surajnath resigned service on 20th April 1990 with some savings, and with the intention of leading the life of a monk. He had remained unmarried, yet was filled with very strong sexual desire, but did not know how to go beyond that, how desire, fear, anger, pride, envy, attachment and so on could be transformed and dissolved. In fact, he did not know the right spiritual way. (This does not mean that a householder cannot be serious about spiritual practice. Anyone can organize their daily life righteously and in such a way as to be able to meditate seriously, though it cannot be denied that solitude is of great help for developing serious meditation.)

Right from childhood Surajnath had felt a passion for right spiritual understanding and a passion to know what life and its essence are and what supreme intelligence, God, is. He was very serious about this. And then there were some other passions as well — he fell in love with a girl but without having sex with her. Here the word “love” is used in the sense of desire for sex and the associated intimacy, to see, listen, talk to, touch and think about one’s partner. However, he was always careful not to deceive or cheat anybody. Otherwise he was not celibate. He remains thoughtful and

observant in day-to-day relationships and activities, and can make mistakes, feel irritations, even minor ones.

He realised the stupidities of conventional religions in childhood and was free from blind beliefs and dogmas, though he had no clear insight into spiritual matters. He does not like books, ideologies, theories, conventional religions that do not point directly to the awakening of intelligence and give no guidance about the energy that works instantly and unconditionally. He disliked carrying the burden of thought-oriented ideological religious books, blind beliefs, and dogmas; nor was he interested in gaining a knowledge of sciences and the arts, though he did occasionally enjoy them and would make use of the knowledge of various sciences when needed, either from others or by learning himself.

Surajnath was formally initiated as a Nath Yogi monk (*samnyāsī*) in 1988 at Trimbak in Nasik District by Budhnath ji, in the presence of Riddhinath ji and some householder friends, having visited Trimbak and consulted Nath Yogi monks on earlier occasions. However, he actually started to wear the garments of a samnyasi or renunciant in May 1990 when he resigned from military service. In January 1992, Bijnath ji completed the formality of piercing the central cartilage of both ears and inserting the large earrings that are the distinguishing feature of fully initiated monks of the Nath Yogi spiritual school; two other monks were initiated with him near Kamargaon village, Ahmednagar District, in the presence of Balknath, alias Cauranginath, of Kedgaon village, Pune District, who, along with Nath monks, made all the necessary arrangements and affectionately took care of

the three candidates' needs throughout the process of about 21 days of wearing of large earrings (worn from about the ninth day), while the cuts healed, allowing them freedom for their inner spiritual *sādhanā* while living in seclusion. The three were not allowed to do anything else. The concluding ceremony, *Gangājalī*, when the three candidates were welcomed as full monks, was attended by about 20 other Nath and Daśanami monks, including Yogi Gendanath, Ganganath, Yogi Sangamnath, Pir Yogi Badrinath, Bholagiri, Budhgiri, Bhagavan Nath, and some close relatives, friends and villagers. To be a genuine monk is generally understood by society as pursuing spiritual enquiry and *sādhanā*, which is also understood to be a need. The monks who bestowed these formal initiations in 1988 and 1992, and others, were of little help with respect to right spiritual understanding and meditation. However Nath monks in general are not dogmatic, and Surajnath therefore worked on his own at Kaivalyadhamma Yoga Institute, Lonavla, practising *vipassanā* at Dhammadgiri, Igatpuri, and doing *sādhanā* in his own hut, in Pimpri Gawali near Ranjangaon.

Though Surajnath has been following the lifestyle of a monk since 1990, he has not left his family home, but neither is he a captive to it. He has a small hut on the farm for his spiritual work, and once or twice a day goes to the family home for meals. Whenever a roaming monk comes to him, he serves him. He keeps a radio in his room and listens regularly to national and international news in the evenings. He has some savings, and with some help from family and friends, manages his day-to-day living.

Let us examine for a moment the various meanings of the word *samnyāsa*. *Sat* + *nyāsa* = *samnyāsa*. *Sat* means truth and *nyāsa* means foundation. Literally *samnyāsa* means truth foundation, the foundation of truth, and a *samnyāsī* is thus one who lives on the foundation of truth, who lives truthfully. Here the word “truth” does not mean thought truth or material truth, which are reality and actuality respectively; rather it means attention truth, meditation. One who is meditating is a *samnyāsī*. Further, according to Monier-Williams’s Sanskrit-English dictionary, *samnyāsa* is derived from the verb *sam-ni-as*, whence *samnyas*, meaning “to throw down together, to lay aside, to give up, abandon”. *Samnyāsa* is the act of putting down or renunciation, and so a *samnyāsī* is one who abandons or resigns worldly affairs, an ascetic.

As part of his spiritual quest and enquiry Surajnath attended the Kaivalyadham Yoga Institute in Lonavla, Pune District, in August 1990, and stayed there for nine months practising various yogic techniques. The college was dominated by brāhmanic ideologists, who were concerned to propagate their views about the soul, God, deities, rituals, worship, prayers, recitations, techniques of contemplating in the name of meditation, all of which he felt to be intellectual things of a lower order. However, there was an excellent and well-maintained library, containing a large number of books by scholars, philosophers, mystics, yogis, sufis, Zen Buddhists, students of Pātañjala Yoga, Osho (Rajneesh) and Jiddu Krishnamurti. Surajnath is very thankful for all those books, for through reading them he learned that reading *can* be of help for understanding. However, some books may have a

psychological or ideological influence on the reader, transforming him or her into a follower of a conventional religion or ideology, be it Shaivite or Vaishnavite Hinduism, Christianity, Islam or communism, or they can lead to various psychic experiences, visions, dreams or delusions: absorbing and projecting mechanism of the mind is capable of many such things. Surajnath has long had a deep respect for Gorakhnath, Buddha, Socrates and Patañjali, but mentally he is not a captive of Gorakh, Buddha, Patañjali or anybody else. He read some of spiritual literature at Kaivalyadhām, but those by Jiddu Krishnamurti touched him the most, including *The Wholeness of Life, Truth and Actuality, Exploration into Insight, The Awakening of Intelligence*, Krishnamurti's notebook *The Ending of Time*, and also his *Can Humanity Change?, Questioning Krishnamurti, Freedom from the Known, Education and the Significance of Life, Beginnings of Learning* and *A Flame of Learning*.

Through his reading of great spiritual masters of different times he gained much knowledge and understood intellectually that one's consciousness is the field in which one has to work, and that meditation and the spiritual journey involve attention, feelings and sensations. Despite such knowledge and understanding, however, he found no real breakthrough, no flight into meditation and the spiritual journey. Although Krishnamurti is quite clear and simple, Surajnath could not get into what it actually is to meditate, what it is to observe feelings and sensations steadily, passively and effortlessly. He was searching. Then in July 1991 he attended a vipassanā meditation course of the

Buddhist school at Igatpuri, in Maharashtra, on the advice of a Swiss friend, Michel Lovey, whom he had met at Kaivalyadhām. This 10-day meditation course was of immense help in learning how to penetrate into the mind and knowing something about what it is to meditate. For the first three days the students were to practise simple observation of the breath as it naturally passes in and out through the nostrils, for strengthening equanimity. After that, there were seven days of continuous observation of sensations, from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet. The main practice was to observe equanimously the sensations occurring throughout the body, part by part. Thus, in every sitting hour the students were asked to let the attention sweep over the body a few times and to observe any lightly vibrating sensations wherever they occurred, and then to observe every sensation, whether mild or painful, as it occurred in the different parts of the body, but without stopping or dwelling on any particular part. The course was based on the Buddha's teachings on śīla, samādhi and prajñā.

He attended some more vipassanā meditation courses, but was not fully satisfied with the vipassanā meditation technique, which led to no natural flowering of meditation. Surajnath seriously wanted to find out about the natural way of meditation. At the same time he was reading Jiddu Krishnamurti, and found the dialogues between Jiddu and Dr. David Bohm extremely interesting, but it seemed to him that most people reading Jiddu find it hard to discover the natural way of meditating. Vipassanā helped in learning the nature of sensations in the body and the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, but the vipassanā

teachers were hesitant about the awareness of feelings. In fact, they declared that the awareness of feelings is not possible for ordinary people. Surajnath did enquire about the awareness of feelings and tried to discuss Jiddu, but at this point the teacher became angry and ordered him to leave the course before its completion. He was critical of Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Surajnath found his view that Jiddu was merely playing an intellectual game throughout his life unacceptable. Later on, he came to know that many brāhmaṇic ideologists were also propagating absurd things about Jiddu Krishnamurti and that he was a danger to brāhmaṇic ideologies, traditions and rituals. He was also seen as a danger to the view of Brāhmans' superiority in Hindu society, a view they have kept for centuries, resulting in the presence of high and low varnas⁴⁴ or castes, which nowadays has become a dead thing and any effort to maintain it is like trying to preserve a deteriorating corpse.

⁴⁴ joga avaraṇa joga abhedā, joga akhanḍita joga achedā,
joga jati sati joga dayā, yehā gyāna jati gorakha kahyā. (313)

Yoga is not varna, yoga is not divided,
yoga is wholeness, yoga is flawless,
yoga is meditation, virtue, yoga is compassion,
this is wisdom, says Jati Gorakh.

This Sabadi sums up the essence of yoga in Gorakhnath's words. Yoga is not *varnāshram*; yoga is not divided into *Hṛīha Yoga*, *Rāja Yoga*, Shaiv, Vaishnav, Vaidik, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and so on; yoga is wholeness of the mind, which can make use of thinking but not vice versa, and so yoga is flawless; the wisdom of yoga is compassion arising from meditation and virtue!

Of course we should not despise those who label themselves Buddhist, Brāhmaṇ, Muslim or whatever — rather we should observe and empty such feelings of distaste etc. whenever they come to us. We should understand that the texts that are claimed to have come from God such as the Vedas, the Qurān, the Bible are in fact the creations of human consciousness, through contemplation, maybe having some partial insights or being in tune with supernatural or divine forces, but being more or less conditioned by traditions and ideas. Needless to say, the silence of God is never broken; nothing can be said about it. Meditators do experience the immensely energetic and silently operating spiritual undercurrent, intelligence or bodhi, that is independent of traditions and ideologies.

Surajnath was unhappy with techniques in the name of meditation, and was still searching to find out what is the natural way of meditating. He used to meditate in solitude, remaining steadily aware of the ever-vibrating sensation in the centre of the upper lip, and then of sensations as they occurred here or there in the body. And within a few days there was an unfolding, an insight, a revelation that *the face is the naturally clear and open screen of the stream of the mind*, of our feelings. All the depths of the mind open up by themselves on the face,⁴⁵ in the changes and expressions in the facial muscles and skin. Our facial expressions *are* feelings, and in this we have the key to catching hold of feelings, to observing feelings easily and naturally. Feelings are the essence, the summation of sensations. Changes in facial expressions can be fast or slow, obvious or subtle. The sensation in the centre of the upper lip is of help in learning

how to remain steady, alert and aware from moment to moment. There is the natural, easy, sweet flowering of meditation in remaining steadily aware of feelings and the sensation on the upper lip. Surajnath explored this with a careful and open mind. Meditation is itself exploration. The theory of religion is found in many texts, but the way of meditation presented throughout this text is radical and completely natural.

Surajnath is thankful to many books and many individuals, but he has four master guides (*sadguru*): the sabadīs of Gorakhnath, the books of Jiddu Krishnamurti, the *vipassanā* of the Buddha, and himself. We ourselves must be our first and last guru, for if we are not a right guru to ourselves, we cannot find a right guru outside. Inside and outside are

⁴⁵ peta ki agani bibarajita, diṣṭi kī agani khāyā,
yāna gurū kā āgāī hī hotā, paṇi biralai avadhū pāyā. (131)

Abandoning the fire of stomach,
eat with the fire of observation.
The master's way is right before you,
rare avadhus have found it.

ūbhā khaṇḍāū baiṭhā khaṇḍāū, khaṇḍāū jāgata sūtā,
tiḥū loka tāī rahū nirantari, tau gorakha avadhūtā. (100)

Break free while standing, break free while sitting,
break free when awake and asleep.
I live unfettered in the three worlds,
so Gorakh is an avadhut.

related, they are one movement. We must be a light unto ourselves, and in this what works is not the ego but intelligence.

Surajnath is a pilgrim, like any of you, on this path. Oh! brothers and sisters, come and see! The easy and natural way of meditation is here, but it is up to us to live it, to keep it awake, to keep the way of intelligence awake. If we do not keep intelligence awake we are simply *cut off* from it. In other words, when you are thought-oriented, then psychologically you are thought, you are one with the thought world, you are that world. Life is movement in relationship and we must live in order to benefit our fellow beings. But it is not sensible or intelligent to linger indefinitely in worldly life, attached to animal or human or the various divine worlds. Meditation is the way of intelligence that dislodges every psychic mould and empties mental impressions — it is the way of intelligence, of natural, unconditioned evolution towards supreme intelligence. Life is sacred, and your meditation is living that sacredness.

The text of this book has been thoroughly edited by his first disciple, Bhagavan Nath (Ian Duncan, along with his wife Leslie), whose mother tongue is English, and grateful thanks are due to him for his work, and for his suggestions, that is, the sharing of intelligence, during long discussions on the various topics covered in this book. Bhagavan Nath is a social anthropologist by background, and in pursuing his interest in the Nath school, met Surajnath in 1990 at Trimbak, Nasik District, Maharashtra, and they became

friends. The writing and editing of this book lasted from 1991 to 2022, and throughout the editing work (1996-2022) the writer and editor were in constant touch by mail, e-mail, along with occasional meetings in Pimpri Gawali village. In accomplishing this third edition, 2022-23, Yogini Rosemary Nath, Guatemala, helped conscientiously, in association with Bhagavan Nath.

Let us keep the way of intelligence awake!

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Surajnath lives near a small village, Pimpri Gawali, in Maharashtra. The closest large town is Ahmednagar, and in the region around that town there are a number of places connected with the Nath Panth. Surajnath can be reached by telephone at +91 9421437300, 7774007939. He will answer mail written to the following address:

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impunito@gmail.com

The addresses of organizations, traditions or teachers referred to in this text are given below. Many are also found on the Internet, and their web sites can be discovered using any of the standard search engines.

J. Krishnamurti
(i) Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Limited
<http://www.kfoundation.org>
Brockwood Park
Bramdean
Hampshire SO24 OLQ
United Kingdom

(ii) Krishnamurti Foundation India
Vasant Vihar
64 Greenways Road
Chennai 600028
India

(iii) The Krishnamurti Foundation of America:

www.kfa.org
www.jkrishnamurti.org

Yoga
Kaivalya Dham Yoga College
Lonawala
Pune District
Maharashtra
India

Vipassanā
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org>
Vipassanā International Academy
P.O. Box 6
Igatpuri
Nasik District
Maharashtra 422403
India

Nath Panth
The official headquarters of the Nath Panth is in Haridwar, Uttar Pradesh, India.
Those interested may search the Web using such keywords as “Gorakhnath”, “Nath Panth” and “Nath Sampraday” for further information.

A limited amount of Nath literature in English can be obtained from:

Gorakhnath Mandir

Gorakhpur

Uttar Pradesh 273015

India

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“Meditation is one of the greatest arts in life — perhaps the greatest, and one cannot possibly learn it from anybody. That is the beauty of it. It has no technique and therefore no authority. When you learn about yourself, watch yourself, watch the way you walk, how you eat, what you say, the gossip, the hate, the jealousy — if you are aware of all that in yourself, without any choice, that is part of meditation. So meditation can take place when you are sitting in a bus or walking in the woods full of light and shadows, or listening to the singing of birds or looking at the face of your wife or child.”

— Jiddu Krishnamurti

gyāna sarīkhā gurū na miliyā, citta sarīkhā celā,
mana sarīkhā melū na miliyā, tīthāī gorakha phirai akelā.
(189)

No guru found like wisdom,
no disciple like consciousness,
no friend like the mind —
so Gorakh roams alone.

— Gorakh, Sabadī 189



Yogi Surajnath and Bhagavan Nath

